

**EXPANDING ADAPTIVE TRANSFER IN THE PROVISION OF
UNIVERSITY WRITING SUPPORT IN NON-ANGLOPHONE
CONTEXTS: A QUALITATIVE STUDY IN CZECH REPUBLIC**

SHAANA A. ALJOE

**Supporting commentary submitted in fulfillment of the
requirements for the award of the degree of Doctor of
Philosophy by Publication**

**School of Education and Psychology, University of Bolton,
United Kingdom**

**In association with The University of New York in Prague,
Czech Republic**

JANUARY 2016

ABSTRACT

This paper focuses on the provision of writing support for native English speaking and multilingual students attending an accredited, English-medium University located in a non-English-speaking country. The study is concerned with the expansion of the theoretical framework of adaptive transfer as it applies to institutional accreditation, writing support assessment, student motivation, reflective practice and alternative uses of technology in writing support. It expands the theoretical framework of adaptive transfer by education theorists Michael-John DePalma and Jeffrey M. Ringer (2012) to analyze themes on accreditation, assessment, student motivation, reflective practice and the use of technology, stemming from peer-reviewed, conference presented and published articles from 2014 to the present. The study concludes that because of the distinct contextual differences, issues and backgrounds of student and teaching faculty that are present in non-Anglophone locations, university level writing support facilities could serve students more effectively by modifying approaches employed at associate or parent institutions residing in Anglophone locations.

Dedication

For my family

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to thank Professor David Kitchener of Bolton University who guided me through the process of research and remained patient with me, especially when the amount of work required for the research combined with my professional teaching commitments threatened to overwhelm me. I would also like to acknowledge the encouragement I received from the University of New York in Prague's administrators, Librarians and especially Dr. Andreas Antonopoulos, the University's Rector. Finally I would like to thank my parents, Courtney and Peggy Aljoe and my sisters, Nicole and Carla for their unwavering encouragement. They have gone the distance with me and were an edifice of infinite support throughout the long process.

Contents

Title Page	1
Abstract	2
Dedication	3
Acknowledgements	4
Contents and appendices	5-6
Glossary of abbreviations and acronyms	7
Brief Synopsis	8
Part I: Introduction	8
A. Contribution to knowledge	11
B. A guiding theoretical framework	12
C. Further issues	13
D. Definition of terms	15
E. Rational and justification for the study	16
Part II: Methodology	17
A. Research types employed	22
B. <i>UNYP Chronicle</i> writing tutor submissions	22
C. Research respondents	24
D. Questionnaires developed	25
E. Working hypotheses	25
F. Scope and limitations with process diagram	26-28
Part III: Themes of the study	29
A. Accreditation	29
B. Assessment	32
C. Student motivation	35
D. Reflective Practice	40
E. Alternative uses of technology in writing support	43
Part IV: Conclusion and recommendations	47

References	52
------------	----

Appendices

1. Reflections on the Establishment of English-medium University-level Writing Support in Non-Anglophone Contexts <i>Proceedings of the 4th MAC 2015</i> ISBN 978-80-905442-9-1	56
2. Bridging a Divide: Assessing and informing the development of writing support at English-medium universities in non-Anglophone contexts using a pre-designed writing center heuristic for a small-scale study in Czech Republic <i>Proceedings of the 5th MAC 2015</i> ISBN 978-80-88085-09-6	66
3. Encouraging First-year, NNES University Students to Seek Writing Support in Non-Anglophonic Contexts <i>Proceedings of the MAC-ETeL Conference 2014</i> ISBN 978-80-905442-7-7	72
4. The Role of Writing Centers at Accredited U.S. Universities in Non-Anglophone Contexts <i>2nd International Multidisciplinary Scientific Conference on Social Sciences & Arts SGEM 2015 Conference Proceedings Book 1, Volume II</i> , ISBN 978-619-7105-45-2	78
5. Sample initial survey questions for instructors and students	98
6. Toward an Alternative to the Traditional Writing Centre Model in Non-Anglophone Contexts <i>Research and Practice in Education</i> , University of Bolton: 2, Sept. 2015	99
7. The Gamification of Writing Support in Non-Anglophone Contexts. Accepted for publication 12.2.2016, <i>Edutainment: Games and ICT in Education</i>	106

Glossary of abbreviations and acronyms

EAP	English for Academic Purposes
ECTC	English Composition Tutoring Class (-es)
EFL	English as a Foreign Language
EMI	English Medium Instruction
ESL	English as a Second Language
FYW	First Year Writers (at colleges/universities)
IELTS	International English Language Testing Service
L1	First Language or mother tongue, especially as it compares to another language in which a student may be less proficient.*
L2	Second Language
MLLs	Multilingual Language Learners
MSCHE	Middle States Commission on Higher Education (US-based)
NES	Native English Speaker
NNES	Non-native English Speaker
OAIR	Office of Assessment and Institutional Research
TEFL / TESOL	Teacher of English as a Foreign Language / Teacher of English as a Second Language
TOEFL	Test of English as a Foreign Language
UK	United Kingdom (GBR)
UNYP	University of New York in Prague
US	United States (USA)
WAC / WID	Writing across the Curriculum / Writing in the Disciplines

*It is important to note that it is increasingly common to meet students with two or more languages serving as their L1, depending on a person's family, history and/or geographical context.

Supporting Commentary

Brief Synopsis

Thesis Topic: The provision of writing support for multilingual EAP and NES students learning together at accredited English-medium universities located in non-Anglophonic contexts.

Main Research question: To what extent is it possible to administer academic writing support at an English medium university located in a non-Anglophone context in the same way that one is administered in an Anglophonic context?

Thesis: Although writing support staff working in non-Anglophone contexts can make practical use of guidelines established in Anglophone contexts, there are cultural considerations that should be highlighted and addressed, as students studying in locations where English is not the locally spoken language require more customized academic and professional writing support to successfully achieve optimal adaptive transfer from the first semester of formal studies. Moreover, writing support tutors working within their respective institutions should be sharing their experiences in order to further expand this relatively new field of enquiry.

I. Introduction

Multilingual- and native-English speaking students comprise undergraduates enrolled in English-medium degree courses at accredited universities outside of English-speaking locations, and this globalized higher-educational landscape is thriving. Across developed countries, there has been an expansion of accredited tertiary English-medium international universities offering accredited undergraduate and postgraduate degrees. Although these institutions are growing in number in English-speaking or Anglophone locations, they are also increasingly founded in contexts where English is not the locally spoken language. This unique location difference poses challenges not only for writing programs, but also specifically for instructors across the academic community and, specifically, academic writing tutors.

The Bologna Process and academic programs such as Erasmus illustrate the advantage for students to broaden their career horizons by travelling to experience different cultures while studying. Many English-medium programs and institutions in non-English-speaking contexts have majority multilingual speakers whose first language is not English. Learning with this group is a minority of monolingual and multilingual native English-speakers. This report focuses on the commonalities that draw these students together with regards to the provision of writing support as a service to assist students in pursuit of academic success.

For college students learning in English, in an environment where English is not the locally spoken language, writing for courses across their academic curriculum can be challenging. Where many students are required as part of a core curriculum to complete first-year English Composition courses, the attrition rates of students from these courses tends to be high due, in large part, to the majority of students developing higher-level writing skills in what is a secondary or tertiary language. In order to reduce the rate of student attrition from pre-requisite courses such as English Composition and, in cases, students consequently withdrawing from the institution entirely, universities seeking to maintain standards have initiated writing support services to supplement prerequisite, first-year, university writing courses.

It has been argued that a percentage of students who withdraw from university studies might be encouraged to stay if provided appropriate support (Xuereb 2014; Abalhassan 2014). Writing support is free to students and offered at many accredited institutions in English-speaking universities, as the service offers students another forum in which they may voluntarily or by direction confer with a writing tutor to practice and improve academic written assignments.

This report examines to what extent writing support models established at university campuses where English is the locally spoken language can serve as a blue-print for the development of services in contexts where English is not the local language. The context is as significant and unique as the students these writing support units serve, because each student is differently motivated to learn and develop a student's English language skills. Researchers have highlighted efforts of universities to address academic English language development (Arkoudis and Tran 2010; Olson 2013; McHarg 2015). Resources currently available to guide writing tutors in writing support services do much to advise on how exactly tutors engage with students in conferences about their academic writing (Matsuda et al. 2011; Elmborg and Hook 2005; Ryan and Zimmerelli 2010; Bruce and Rafoth 2004). However, there is less research on the efficacy of one-to-one conferences versus any other model of conference within or outside of the allocated writing support unit. It is argued here that writing support services offered to students attending English-medium programs might consider remodeling the provision of writing support away from the traditional and toward an alternative that would better satisfy the individual culturally-sensitive needs of students.

What connects international students beyond studying at an accredited English-medium university in a non-Anglophone context? They will likely require extra help and feedback when it comes to academic writing, which is a skill that they may have little or no experience in given their educational backgrounds. It is worth noting that native English speaking students, who form the

minority in this report, study alongside non-native English speaking students and academic expectations are identical for both at this level.

Writing support units have been established for international students, so that, from the first year of study, they can work towards achieving the level of writing required of them to be successful students. They will not be separated according to varying levels of English language knowledge, and they will learn to write academically together. These are students who may pose a challenge to teaching faculty and writing support tutors at English-medium universities in non-Anglophone contexts depending on their individual educational backgrounds. Each is unique in their approach to studying and each will come to college-level academic writing in a unique way.

What follows is a study conducted by Aljoe; a first-year English Composition instructor who is also one of three tutors at a writing support facility at a non-Anglophone-based English-medium University, where international students are attempting to complete an accredited undergraduate bachelor's degree. Although the study focuses on a particular university, it can likely be applied to other similar institutions in other non-Anglophone locations. The study of how best to provide writing support seems comparatively new, gauging from the scarcity of extant research currently available. This research project began in February 2010 and is an ongoing project, which seems to be the nature of academic research within the subject area of academic writing. Its contribution to a wider body of knowledge will be presented, followed by an exploration of themes which have been double-blind, peer-reviewed by distinguished academics in the field of education, published and, in all cases but two, were personally presented at academic conferences in similar non-Anglophone locations pertinent to this study.

The motivation for this study is multifaceted. Through this Aljoe's professional experience of teaching academic writing in English in a non-Anglophone environment, issues that students have not only with writing, but also, and more importantly, with requesting help with writing assignments became clear. Aljoe's own reflective practice which she had already begun to document through her article contributions to the UNYP Chronicle, to be expanded upon later in this study was another motivating factor. The lack of extant literature on how to establish writing support in this unique context was yet a further motivating factor in pursuing this study. My personal desire to contribute to the field of academic writing in non-Anglophone contexts along with a further wish to validate the notion that this trend of international learning is set to continue and grow in the future.

There were mainly two professional obstacles that threatened to undermine the initiative of providing writing support. Firstly, it was important to have a high degree of support from

management and, more importantly, from colleagues, most of whom were dubious about the degree to which tutors might be 'assisting' students. Assurances were given that the writing support service would not be an editing facility for students nor would the tutors be engaging in writing assignments *for* students. The second challenge came from Aljoe's existing, weighty professional commitments which would have to be managed alongside this new project for which there would be no extra financial compensation. This is, of course, commonly the case with professional 'passion' projects such as establishing new support facilities for students.

This study is concerned with the expansion of the theoretical framework of adaptive transfer as it applies to institutional accreditation, writing support assessment, student motivation, reflective practice and alternative uses of technology in writing support. It primarily draws upon the work of education theorists Michael-John DePalma and Jeffrey M. Ringer on adaptive transfer to synthesize five themes stemming from peer-reviewed, conference presented and published articles from 2014 to the present. In part one of the commentary, the contribution to knowledge is explained along with further issues related to the overall study. The definition of terms are clarified, and followed by the rationale for the use of a particular theoretical framework approach. In part two, the methodology of the study is explained, including a description of the research types used, the research respondents and the questionnaires developed. This is followed in the same part by the study's hypotheses, scope and limitations and its prevailing significance. In part three, five themes emerging from double-blind peer-reviewed, conference presented and published articles on the development of writing support in this non-Anglophone context are examined. Part four explains the significance of sharing the experiences of writing support tutors. Finally, part five concludes the study with recommendations for further research.

A. Contribution to Knowledge

Previous research on writing support provision at English-medium universities in Anglophone contexts implies that existent models of writing support, as on offer in English-speaking contexts, can be wholly applied to universities located in non-Anglophone contexts. This research shows that a one-size-fits-all approach needs modification to suit students who fall into two groups; native-English speaking (NES) students, who form the minority, and non-native English speaking (NNES) students, and who study together towards the same goal of achieving academic success. The argument here is that by expanding the theoretical framework of adaptive transfer in the provision of writing support, researchers can develop customized writing support that will foster greater success in academic writing not only for multilingual learners, but also for native English-speaking learners who attend universities in non-Anglophone contexts, from the first year of study.

By customizing writing support services to foreground consideration of the cultural differences of students, English-medium accredited universities operating in non-Anglophone contexts can reduce the rate of student attrition in challenging prerequisite courses such as English Composition. A student's success in such academic writing courses impacts a student's entire university experience. The significance of successful writing in academia from the first year of study cannot be overstated, as students are required to write academically throughout their academic career. The popularized model of writing support being a one-to-one conference with a writing tutor may not be the most effective model of support to offer students who have little or no experience of engaging with writing support services. This report illustrates how the traditional writing support conference model can be enhanced to suit students from various backgrounds.

B. A Guiding Theoretical Framework

In order to pull the various themes of research presented here together, a theoretical framework was used. The selected framework will not only tie separate elements into one cohesive work, but also provide support for statements made about the different aspects of support and entities being studied. The chosen framework seems the most appropriate to apply to this study given the wide ranging themes included and will help to clarify the supporting data located in the published manuscripts that form the appendices of this study.

The concept of Adaptive Transfer which, according to DePalma and Ringer (2012), "is the conscious or intuitive process of applying or reshaping learned writing knowledge in new and potentially unfamiliar writing situations," (p. 44) forms the preferred theoretical framework that best provides a context for, correlates with and drives the need for providing writing support for majority EAP and EFL students who attend non-Anglophonic based English-medium, accredited universities. Just as DePalma and Ringer (2012) have argued, "adaptive transfer offers specialists a theoretical construct that will reveal the complex ways in which multilingual writers learn to write across the disciplines" (p. 47), so too can the same construct be expanded in the provision of writing support, revealing ways to improve services to students. This is also the reason for the selection of DePalma and Ringers Adaptive Transfer theoretical framework; it applies specifically to multilingual writers learning to write in English for specific purposes. Aljoe could find no other theorists that focused so specifically and comprehensively on multilingual writers to the degree that DePalma and Ringer do, therefore their framework Adaptive Transfer seemed the most appropriate framework suited to the general focus of the published manuscripts that form the appendices of this study.

Although, adaptive transfer was developed to "mainstream multilingual writers" (Hall, 2009 p.37) in an American context, it is likely also applicable at a non-Anglophone located university

because, according to Hall (2009), “multilingual issues will not be confined to the ESL program or the ESL sections of freshman composition or to the Writing Center; rather, they will be in every classroom in every subject on every campus, and every faculty member will be responsible for teaching MLLs” (45). For this research, it is necessary to expand the framework of adaptive transfer to include the learning practices of students who are indeed reusing their previous learning experiences in the new and unfamiliar context of tertiary content-based language instruction.

Combined at times with adaptive transfer, the work of Stephen Krashen and Albert Bandura are referred to in order to build a conceptual foundation of understanding that was reached through Aljoe’s professional practice. The ideas presented by Krashen and Bandura serve to support the validity of this study. It is hoped that the theoretical grounding provided here will inspire tutor/researchers working in similar conditions to experiment with methods and solutions presented here.

C. Further Important Issues

Multilingual international students form the majority of students enrolled in first-year English Composition courses at the same accredited, English-medium University in Prague, Czech Republic. The students that a writing lab/support tutor regularly encounters are normally in need of conference with a trained tutor. If and when the student can seek writing support at university, it is because the student is directed to do so by an instructor, or because he/she feels self-motivated to seek guidance with written assignments. Moreover there exists another group of students who comprise a minority cohort studying at the same university, who are also of varying backgrounds, but who are monolingual native English speakers (NES).

Multilingual learners and native-English speakers learn together and experience tertiary education in a non-Anglophone context. The establishment of English-medium degree programs established in non-Anglophone contexts is a unique but growing phenomenon globally. Recent research reveals that multilingual learners are becoming the majority also in Anglophone contexts (Hall, 2009). However, for the purposes of this study, the focus will be on both types of learners in non-Anglophone contexts. This study offers insights into the ways both groups of students can best be served by university writing support facilities in this particular context.

Although students attending the University of New York in Prague (UNYP) whose first language is not English are required to demonstrate sufficient English proficiency and receive a minimum score on the TOEFL or IELTS examination, many are unaccustomed to and unfamiliar with what it means to write academically for English-medium programs and lecturers at university level. At the same time, NES students entering the University are also new to writing in this academic

context. This is why courses such as first year English Composition are prerequisite, which is also a standard requirement at many Anglophone located universities. This analysis asserts that non-native English speaking (NNES) first-year students, also referred to as multilingual learners (MLLs), studying in an Anglophone context, such as Britain and the US, likely comprising a minority population across Anglophone university campuses require a different approach in writing support to NNES students who comprise a majority of the student body.

In the experience of Aljoe, it seems writing support services offered by universities located in a non-Anglophone contexts would certainly require a distinctly unique approach in order to best serve their students, not only in the first year of study, but also in later years of formal education. The question of how best to administer writing support at universities with programs taught in English, where the majority of students are NNES with varying levels of motivation, is important because simply transplanting a model that works in an Anglophone context to a non-Anglophone one is, as this analysis will show, a faulty exercise given the distinct differences of students' educational backgrounds, training and culture (Kwadzo 2014). Writing support research and development can be enhanced through expanding the theoretical framework of adaptive transfer in a variety of ways from the perspectives of the writing tutors and the students who seek them out for support with their written assignments.

It should be noted that students who study in English in non-Anglophonic settings do not always desire a future career or to live in a fully Anglophone environment. Some may rarely if ever visit or relocate to an English-speaking country, but the desire to complete a formal education in English is still strong. These learners are usually referred to as multilingual learners (MLLs) and/or English for Academic Purposes (EAP) learners who see themselves using English for academic and professional purposes mainly. Other learners are EFL/ESL learners who desire to live, at least for some time, in an English-speaking context at some point and even throughout their professional careers. Both of these types of students are subsumed under MLLs and NNES for this study and will likely need the same additional writing support that is commonly offered by universities located in Anglophone contexts. Researchers agree that without writing support facilities, accredited universities are not 'doing right' by the students they claim to serve (Yahner and Murdick, 1991; Carino, 1995; North, 1984; Waller, 2002).

Today there are many colleges and universities that offer bachelor, master and even doctoral degrees through the medium of English instruction, some have writing support to complement existing writing courses such as writing centers. These institutions can generally be divided into two distinct categories: accredited and non-accredited. Accreditation in formal academia is also considerably important, because it is a recognizable indication of a quality standard in teaching

and learning which can compete with other similarly accredited institutions globally and will impact the provision of writing support to students. The main focus of this study will be to emphasize the expansion of the theoretical framework of adaptive transfer as a way of moving the discussion on provision of writing support forward, and to aid in improving this service for the benefit of students.

D. Definition of Terms

The term non-Anglophone is used here to refer to locations where English is not the commonly spoken language outside of the classroom. This excludes the following nations and territories: America, Australia, Britain (and her former British Commonwealth countries), Canada, India, New Zealand, South Africa, and the English speaking Caribbean, Anglo-Micronesian and Polynesian Islands where English is considered the native or official spoken language. For the purposes of this report, non-Anglophonic location will mainly refer to the Slavonic-speaking countries of Eastern Europe, but can be more broadly applied to areas where English is not an official language of communication outside the classroom.

Non-native English speakers (NNES) or multilingual speakers (MLLs) will refer to those students for whom English is not the first language (L1) or mother tongue. Native English speakers (NES) refers to students whose L1 is English. It should be noted here that many L1 students enrolled in English-medium degree programs are monolingual, which adds another dimension to this study not only because they are studying in a non-Anglophone context, but also because the locally spoken language will also be absorbed both purposefully and by default. This will be further considered later on in this study. Writing support tutors assist students not only with writing for first-year English composition, but also for writing across the curriculum (WAC) and writing in the disciplines (WID) for the purposes of this analysis.

Students enrolled at the English-medium University engage in many layers of learning; first year writing (FYW) in English for Academic Purposes (EAP), multilingual learning and English as a Foreign Language (EFL). To varying degrees students will engage in these layers, depending on their motivation. The university used for the case study presented in this paper enrolls a mix of both types of students. It is also possible and considered 'normal' that students may change motivation levels during their studies for a variety of reasons which are also worthy of further research, but lie outside of this study.

Two acronyms used briefly in this analysis to refer to tests that potential students are required to take and gain a sufficiently high enough score for entry to the university are the Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) and the International English Language Test Score (IELTS). The writing support tutors have specialized English language teaching credentials usually referred to as Teacher of English as a Foreign Language (TEFL) or a Teacher of English as a Second

Language (TESOL) certificate from officially recognized English language teacher training institutions such as Trinity College, UK. The head tutors must also have both undergraduate and post graduate degrees from British and American accredited universities. English Medium Instruction or EMI is a term that is gaining traction in academic circles globally to refer specifically to programs taught in English usually in a location where English is not the local language. However, for this study English-medium will refer to complete degree programs for clarity.

E. The Rationale and Justification for the Study

The growing number of accredited English-medium degree programs and universities established in non-Anglophonic locations requires that students acquire a standard level of academic writing across the curriculum. This practice-based study focuses on one private institution, the University of New York in Prague (UNYP), and reveals that offering writing support in virtually the same mode as it is offered in Anglophone contexts is insufficient, especially for the increasing numbers of NNES or MLLs enrolling on them. Moreover, as these linguistically diverse students form the mainstream in this context, there is a need for NES students learning with them to be accommodated in their pursuit of successfully completing an accredited university degree program.

In short, the two primary challenges were how to establish writing support in this unique context, and how to get increasing numbers of students to engage with it in a way that would increase chances of academic success. This study which includes the published manuscripts that form the appendices charts the development of writing support and will assist educators and education administrators in making choices about critical writing support options for students that take into account the students' backgrounds so that they will experience greater success in their studies. This study will also assert that NNES and NES students in non-Anglophone contexts can be taught together as one mainstream, making efforts to separate the two groups needlessly expensive, unnecessary and counter-productive in this more nuanced context where English is not the locally spoken language outside the walls of the university.

Further challenges encountered by Aljoe included spending an extraordinary amount of time and effort researching how best to establish writing support at UNYP where she began tutoring academic writing six years ago, when she first opened the first Writing Lab at UNYP. Due to the limited research in the field, the option taken at the time was to simply copy what was done in an Anglophone context as there were no reports such as this one to inform her. In performing the research that comprises this study, Aljoe has gained an appreciation and knowledge that will certainly be of use to others who are similarly tasked with providing academic support for students assembled from a variety of backgrounds. Had this report been available at the time of the establishment of writing support at UNYP in 2009, much time would have been saved in the development of the support as it exists today.

II. Methodology Used for the Study

The analysis presented in this study aims to correlate a collection of six previously published double-blind peer reviewed articles concerning the establishment of writing support for students enrolled at an American, British and Czech accredited English-medium university located in the specific non-Anglophonic context of the Czech Republic. Themes that have been explored reflect a number of varying research designs from the inception of a writing support unit that was established at the University of New York in Prague in the fall semester of 2009. The themes include accreditation, assessment, motivations to access writing support, the reflective practice of the management, teaching faculty and writing support founder / head tutor, alternative uses of digitized writing support and the future development of writing support in the unique context of Czech Republic.

Each of the six published manuscripts bar one follow a unique research design, but raise awareness of different aspects of providing writing support at university level. In the reflective article, Aljoe (Feb, 2015) enquires (appendix 1) to what extent can one conventional model of writing support be transplanted in a different linguistic setting and recounts the establishment of academic writing support in English in the unique circumstance of a non-Anglophonic context, through the basic action research process of hypothesizing, planning, acting, observing and reflecting. It was here that Aljoe discovered, upon reflection following observation, that establishing a writing support unit in the same way as it is done in the US or other Anglophone contexts would require a different approach in order to attract the students who needed help, but who could not see this need for themselves. For all of the planning that went into the establishing the writing support service, it became clear that a different approach was clearly necessary for sustainability and success.

The second article focuses on assessment of the support service but is closely related to the reflective article in that it was the result of asking a similar question: would it be possible to use a form of evaluation that was not developed specifically for a writing support unit based outside of an English speaking context? Using a predesigned heuristic to evaluate the writing support unit that Aljoe (Oct, 2015) had established (appendix 2) as a means of improving efficacy of the service as perceived by students, lecturing staff and management proved useful and convenient. This simplified process of evaluation seems to be the most pragmatic approach to maintaining a writing support service and involves the main stakeholders on the campus, without it being overly arduous to collect necessary data by asking for data that would be traditionally held by those with a vested interest such as management and instructors across the academic curriculum.

The next two articles focus on student motivation and the role of writing tutors and instructors within the academy in encouraging students to engage with the writing support services provided by UNYP. The questions that began the action research processes written about in these

manuscripts focused on data collected from students and writing tutors. Questions specifically about students' reluctance to request help with writing assignments were asked, alongside questions regarding how students might be encouraged and supported to request help and how writing center tutors can guide students to receive the help that students need. Furthermore, Aljoe (2014) determines (appendix 3) that a university's accreditation status is also a critical factor.

Through a first-year, end of semester student survey Aljoe (2014) found (appendix 3) that 90% students believed that at least one visit to the writing support services or units should be required of all students. However, the same survey reported the low numbers of student visits to the support unit, which revealed that the students' best intentions were sometimes thwarted by an inability to follow through. This is also where NES and NNES students show a high degree of similarity. In the fourth article, Aljoe (Aug. 2015) considers (appendix 4) motivation in that if students feel they are attending an institution where standards are held according to a recognized international standard, they will likely develop the desire to succeed in their studies. Those students who wish to study at a reputable university should enquire about aspects of credibility such as accreditation, and those universities with this type of recognition set themselves apart from degree mills; fraudulent academic institutions that cannot offer recognized degree qualifications.

The fifth and sixth articles were the result of further action research which began with two separate questions regarding the efficacy of offering just one-to-one tutoring, and whether there were additional ways to incorporate the use of technology in writing support provision. The answer to the first question led to the evolution of two different forms of writing support at UNYP. Aljoe (Sep.2015) presents (appendix 6) The English Composition Tutoring Class (ECTC) was established as a result of surveying students and staff in an attempt to reach out to those students who were still reluctant to engage with the writing support service. By this time, Aljoe (Sep. 2015) had noticed that students who attended the writing support service, as it operated then, would often do so in groups of two or more (appendix 6). This led to the introduction of a forum of assistance where students could attend in groups or individually to work on various aspects of language with a professionally TEFL/ TOEFL trained tutor present. This was an immediately successful intervention which was regularly well-attended from its inception.

The sixth and final publication for this study focuses on the use of digital technology in the provision of writing support at universities in non-Anglophone contexts. Aljoe (2016) has found (appendix 7) that rather than replacing tutors with computer algorithms which would have students working in isolation, writing tutors are afforded another approach to working with technology which would allow for student / tutor conferences on a regular basis. Cultural

sensitivities are highlighted here through the work of sociologists Donald Light Jr and Suzanne Keller in 1985. They highlight the importance of considering cultural lens that students will likely view and judge their interactions with others through. This observation led to the development of the practice model (appendix 7) is given for students and tutors to document the development of a piece of academic or professional writing where writing can be more clearly appreciated as a process. The impetus for this final article was also partly the result of writing lab tutor discussions with visiting students in different years of study and various stages in their academic development.

When the six manuscripts are viewed as a whole, it becomes apparent that a mixed method research design was followed in this research with a strongly qualitative inclination. It was felt that this approach best accommodated Aljoe's professional commitments. Defining the effectivity of services on student grade assessment and number of support visits is research that reflects a more quantitative nature, requiring time and resources that were not available to Aljoe at the time of this study, but which may be considered for future research.

The inter-rater reliability is based on well-documented traditionally accepted methods of assessment and was achieved through triangulation. Aljoe combined a number of instruments such as data from questionnaires, a sample of which is provided in appendix 5, voluntarily completed by students and instructors with informally recorded sporadic conversations with colleagues about student writing to support the basis for this study. The data gathered provided substantive information and feedback regarding students' attitudes to and abilities in academic writing in English, and such input provided valuable insight into the development of writing support services. Further inter-rater reliability was gained in that students attending the university must achieve a sufficiently high enough score on internationally recognized tests of English such as the TOEFL or IELTS.

When the first writing support unit was established at UNYP, Aljoe being the sole tutor at the time created survey material in order to measure the effectiveness of the support service. The support service as it existed at the beginning was rudimentary, consisting of just a desk and a few chairs in a corner of the campus library. The unit operated on one day per week for three hours. Mainly based on group administered surveys developed by the tutor (see appendix 5), the writing support unit developed and expanded, recently acquiring two separate spaces on campus; the first is where students can seek out one-to-one conferences with tutors on assignments, and, the second space, where students can learn individually or in small groups in a classroom-like environment.

A practical approach was taken with regard to validity and reliability of data collected for this study. Primarily, attendance records were kept for writing support visits. The use of sampling was found to be inappropriate for this study as the student language ability is not its focus. Selecting

subsets of students would likely not influence the work presented here. Therefore, a measure of formative validity was achieved through the examination of writing support service attendance records. The expansion and remodeling of the traditional writing support service also involved formative validity, which led to the improvement of the service. Aljoe (Oct, 2015) uses a pre-designed heuristic as a writing services assessment tool, providing a type of inter-rater reliability, as tutors, students, teaching faculty and management rate the service according to their respective needs.

The issue of taking mainly qualitative approach strategies over quantitative ones is, according to Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2013) a matter of “fitness for purpose” (p. 203). What distinguishes these two main approaches is highlighted when the traits of both are listed. In terms of the concerns of those impacted by the writing support service,” in qualitative methodologies reliability includes fidelity to real life, context- and situation-specificity, authenticity,... and meaningfulness to the respondents” (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, p. 203-4, 2013). By virtue of their differences, a qualitative approach was considered to be more appropriate for this study.

The reasons for employing the methods used in this study are reflected in the particular focus of each manuscript attached in the appendices of this paper. Firstly, the problem of how best to assist students of varying cultural backgrounds became evident. Secondly, the issue of how to attract and encourage a greater number of students to utilize the service on offer, without them feeling that they were being targeted for remediation, needed to be considered. By surveying and canvassing both the students who were and who were not using the service as well as the teaching faculty of the university, the writing support services and tutors were able to achieve a higher level of regard and respectability within the institution. The steady growth of the support service has had a positive impact on students, teaching faculty and administrators.

Ethical considerations were made at the relevant junctions for this qualitative study. University ethical clearance was given to this researcher without dictum or agenda. The management at UNYP supported this study, in so much as it inaugurated the establishment of the first writing center and supported the research and development Aljoe has done since that time. They maintain a continuing interest in its existence and provide updates and physical amenities of space and equipment. The data was gathered from surveys and questionnaires, containing questions such as those listed in appendix 5, and were completed voluntarily and anonymously by students and teaching staff. The student surveys and questionnaires were distributed in class to ensure that each participating student completed one form. The teaching faculty were trusted to complete their forms without such proctoring.

Although this study primarily attempts to link the published manuscripts in the appendices to show how the theoretical framework of adaptive transfer can be expanded, the study is further supported by the work of psychologist Albert Bandura who, in 1986, published *Social*

Foundations of Thought and Action where he introduces social cognitive theory. Highlighting the importance of the impact of environmental influences on human behavior and motivation, Bandura's theory also has the concept of self-efficacy at its core which strongly correlates with DePalma and Ringer's concept of adaptive transfer. Going beyond the duty of class instructors, writing support tutors are also engaged in raising a student's sense of self-efficacy. DePalma and Ringer seem to support the notion that if one has successfully undergone adaptive transfer, then feelings of self-efficacy would certainly increase in strong correlation. In this respect, Bandura's work provides a lens through which to view motivational aspects examined in this study, because this unique context in which students learn is likely to have a high degree of influence on their individual learning outcomes.

The focus of this study is not only on non-native English speaking learners but also on native-English speaking students as, within a private education context, they will be learning together with many classes having non-native English speakers in the majority. For this reason, Stephen Krashen's (2013) work on language acquisition becomes pertinent. The nature of language input is important because when English-medium higher education occurs outside of an English-speaking context, students in both groups are impacted by subconscious processes, whether or not they are actively learning the local language. Here too DePalma and Ringer's framework of adaptive transfer can be recognized, as language acquisition also requires a strong degree of transfer in not only learning new vocabulary, but also in appreciating linguistic nuances and conventions within differing cultural contexts.

Further theoretical support for this study can be found in the notions of constructivism which sees learners as having some agency in their acquisition of knowledge, and constructionism which views the development of writing support services as a socio-cultural artifact with the purpose of increasing the value of education sought by students and provided by educators. The provision of writing support services encourages students to see themselves not as passive recipients of knowledge, but as actively able to construct their own knowledge based on interactions within their surroundings. The provision of writing support can also be perceived as adhering to a learner-centered approach, as the writing tutor acts as a cognitive guide to learning.

Upon reconsideration of the research question, it becomes clear that the context of learning seems to play a critical role in tertiary English-medium education located in non-Anglophone contexts, especially when considering the philosophical theories of Bandura, Krashen and others. The issue is not whether writing support should exist or not. Rather, the question is how best to implement writing support given a different socio-linguistic context. It was this difference that led to a rethink of how writing support is administered in a non-Anglophone context which, in turn, led to the current study. One could further argue that context might dictate the design of a writing support service as it has at the University of New York in Prague.

A. Research Types Employed

In order to address the problem of how best to offer writing support for majority MLLs in this unique context, a combination of research designs were implemented. Firstly, exploratory and the previously explained action research processes led to the initial establishment of the writing support unit, relying mainly on published manuals about writing laboratories, following a qualitative approach. Secondly, in order to sustain the writing support unit, it was necessary to conduct basic statistical research through satisfaction surveys to justify its existence and continuance to both the faculty and management of the University. Finally, phenomenological research rounds out the themes that govern this analysis, as much of this study was done as part of Aljoe's professional experience as both an English Composition instructor and a writing center tutor. What follows will also, in part, focus on qualitative research used to gain a deeper understanding of how cultural factors can serve as barriers to students' motivation to request writing support, using elements of quantitative research to provide an observational analysis.

Further supplemental material for research carried out at the University takes the form of short expository essays written by the teaching faculty for the University's electronic monthly journal *The UNYP Chronicle*. Articles electronically published in this periodical focus on the writing support offered at the University studied for this report and are written by the founder and head tutor of the writing support facilities. The articles published here are quite brief, but they do offer insights into critical reflections on the continuing development of the writing support services offered to students.

This supporting commentary serves to connect published work that has been double-blind reviewed by peers working both within and outside of the academic community located in a non-Anglophone context. It is written in a style that is appreciated and best understood by scholars some of whom are not native English speakers. Due to the amount of time spent teaching and functioning in a non-English environment, Aljoe has learnt to adopt a clearer tone in writing which might appear less academic than peers who write within an English only context. This note has been included in order to justify the language used within this research with the hope that it will be accessible in terms of understanding to a greater number of readers, some of whom will be non-native English speakers who teach first year writing at universities in the English language.

B. The Significance of Writing Support Tutor Contributions to the *UNYP Chronicle*

Since the establishment of the Writing Lab at UNYP, the founder has been contributing articles about the writing support services at the University, once a semester. *The UNYP Chronicle* is freely available to access via UNYP's Web address and publishes articles written by members of the teaching faculty exclusively, but it is not a peer-reviewed publication in the conventional sense. However it is indeed 'peer' reviewed by interested parties in the English-medium non-

Anglophonic academic community. Aljoe has sporadically received requests for reports of the status of UNYP's writing support units from other writing support administrators, directors and tutors at institutions within the non-Anglophonic European academic community at institutions where degree programs are taught in English.

In terms of the development of writing support facilities at these institutions, it has been reported that this record of progress is invaluable to tutors engaged in similar practices at universities across Europe certainly, and hopefully around the world. The act of sharing experiences as researchers and tutors with others in other locations is not new and is encouraged within academic circles. Leaky (1992) offers an effective explanation for the importance of sharing our experience as writing tutors. *UNYP Chronicle* contributions written by the writing support tutor has "bonus of getting the writing center [support unit] plenty of cheap publicity and credibility with the faculty" (p. 51). Gerd Brauer (2004), who claims to have opened one of the first tertiary writing centers in a non-Anglophonic European context, points out that outside of Anglo-American higher education writing support is a fairly new concept (pp. 134-135). His observations highlighted the necessity of promotion as an important part of introducing a university writing support service to a culturally diverse set of students who are unfamiliar with such a service. Aljoe has authored articles, at least once per semester, based on the development of the Writing Lab at UNYP published in the University's own monthly electronic journal, *The UNYP Chronicle*, since the Lab was established in autumn 2009.

This new and growing phenomenon of accredited institutions offering degree programs in English will continue to expand. When we as writing support tutors contribute articles documenting our experiences within academia, we engage in the creation and interpretation of new knowledge through our own scholarship. We extend the prominence of our discipline or area of practice. Harris (2000) offers this compelling point, where she emphasizes, "We just need to realize how vital it is to keep moving forward—to ask ourselves some hard questions; to explore and surface principles for some areas that we have tended to leave unarticulated because we "know" them; to seek out administrators and tell them what we've found;... to understand that the coldness of cyberspace needs to be confronted and conquered; to seek help from—and work with—the technology experts we need; and finally, to realize that we must clink that glass and talk to our colleagues, to share with them what we have learned and created so that they too can respond to their students online, in pedagogically effective ways. They are going to need us too. If we can accomplish all this, we won't just be viable parts of our institutions; we'll be vital" (p. 21). Bandura's (1986) notions of learning through observing students and writing support tutors working in the context of experiences and social interactions are highlighted through articles

written by writing tutors about writing support in the monthly electronic periodical, *The UNYP Chronicle*.

C. Research Respondents

Two groups of research respondents were surveyed for the questionnaires developed for this analysis. The first group comprised the teaching faculty of the University studied, which are made up of a virtually equal number of native and non-native English speakers. The second group included both NNES and NES students but, as previously recognized, MLLs formed the majority, as they do at many English medium tertiary institutions in non-Anglophone contexts.

The teaching faculty respondents, including native and non-native English speakers, teach their subjects through the medium of English, without exception. This means that language teachers of Czech, Spanish, German and French participated in surveys (and formed the most vocal group of respondents) regarding writing support provision at the University. Questionnaires returned by the teaching faculty were equally weighted in spite of the subjects they taught. This level of inclusivity sought to encourage cohesion among teaching staff, but may have affected the validity of the research results.

The FYW students, forming the second group of respondents, were enrolled in a first semester prerequisite writing course of English Composition, focusing on academic writing. Students taking this course are studying for bachelor's degrees in Business Administration, International Economic Relations, Communications and Mass Media, English Language and Literature and Psychology. Although the course has a second component that is also required and is usually offered in the second semester of the first year of bachelor study, only students registered in the first semester offering of the English Composition course were involved due to their presumed 'newness' to the study of university-level academic writing in English. Students who successfully complete the first semester of English Composition have been introduced to academic writing, giving them an advantage over those who have little or no exposure to college-level writing upon beginning the first part of the academic writing course. The students' ages ranged from as young as 16 to 35 years and older in some cases.

It should be noted that the management of the University studied had limited but integral involvement in the research conducted for this study, especially in consideration of assessment of writing support services. Although they were not surveyed respondents to questionnaires such as those returned by students and teaching faculty, their role in directing the development of writing support at the university should not be underestimated. Their considerable contribution to the research lies in their provision of space, time and, eventually, financial resources to the

development of the customized writing support facilities now available at the University and remains of critical value and importance, without which this study would not have been possible.

D. Questionnaires Developed

The group administered questionnaires developed and used in this research were designed and administered by the writing support founder and head tutor who is also a first year writing (FYW) instructor, teaching both prerequisite semesters of English Composition. This mainly qualitative aspect of the research focused on gauging attitudes toward writing support provision and greatly aided in its development. Its investigatory value in determining the efficiency of writing support led to changes which are further detailed in the thematic exposition that follows in this analysis. This approach to data gathering was found to be the most convenient form of enquiry, as it allowed for the tutor to analyze a tangible instrument of measurement, data-gathering could be completed anonymously, and it is less time consuming than a group interview or focus group, which would have to occur outside of class hours, creating an additional logistics issue of having to gather people in one space at one time. It has been Aljoe's unfortunate experience that unless there is some rewarding incentive to do so, students will rarely, if ever, gather outside of class time to assist with academic research.

The surveys included both long and short answer responses centering on the newly provided writing support services. Likert scale type questions were also included to allow for opinions best expressed by degree of satisfaction with the writing support offered as reported by students. The questionnaires were generally satisfaction surveys containing varying types of questions, as shown in the sample student and instructor question lists in appendix 5 at the back of this study. Some researchers have observed that satisfaction surveys provide an inaccurate picture of a studied phenomenon. However, for the University studied for this report, questionnaires served as catalysts for making changes to the traditional model of writing support offered and led to further development of writing support services.

E. The Working Hypotheses

The research presented aims to determine whether university accreditation status has any relation to or influence upon the provision of writing support services and if assessment tools used in an Anglophone context can also be effectively used in a non-Anglophone one. Also to be explored is whether the writing support model of one-to-one conferences employed by many universities in Anglophone locations to help MLLs/NNES and EAP students with FYW is the only efficient form of support, considering the diverse cultural backgrounds of mainly NNES students. Furthermore, if this research, to be explored through the themes examined in the published articles and conference papers on the topic of writing support, will inform not only writing support

practitioners, but also teaching faculty and administrators of tertiary English-medium programs located in non-Anglophone contexts for which there is currently very little but an increasing amount of research published?

As more tutors, students and faculty become aware of what accreditation is, and what the provision of writing support means for a university in an Anglophone context, the more they will likely demand that rigorous standards within academia are achieved and maintained. By developing other forms and spaces for writing support tutors to convene with students to work on written assignments, more students are attracted to using the service that suits them best based on their cultural and educational backgrounds, whether it be one-to-one in an office-type setting or one-to-one in a classroom environment. This study, as it is approached through the published themes of accreditation, assessment, motivations, reflective practice and alternative uses of technology in university-level writing support, has and will inform others working in the field. The diagram at the end of this section illustrates the process of highlighting students who will likely benefit from additional tutoring in writing.

F. Scope and Limitations of the Study

The scope of the research undertaken for the following themes began in the fall semester of 2009, when the first writing support unit was established at the University of New York in Prague (UNYP), which offers bachelor degree programs which are accredited in the US, the UK and the Czech Republic. The teaching faculty and first-year, first-semester writing students form the two main focus groups. Opening the research to the entire student body might yield different results and might be worthy of further investigation.

Other potential limitations of this study include its subjectivity, making it difficult to determine if the results can be applied across non-Anglophonic contexts where MLLs form the majority of the student population. Writing support researchers such as Harris (2000) and Brauer (2004) assert that many writing support units are formed and operate within the unique circumstances of each university setting, which makes them difficult to compare linearly. The development of a rubric of comparison that can be applied across non-Anglophone contexts also requires further study as this lies outside of the scope of this paper.

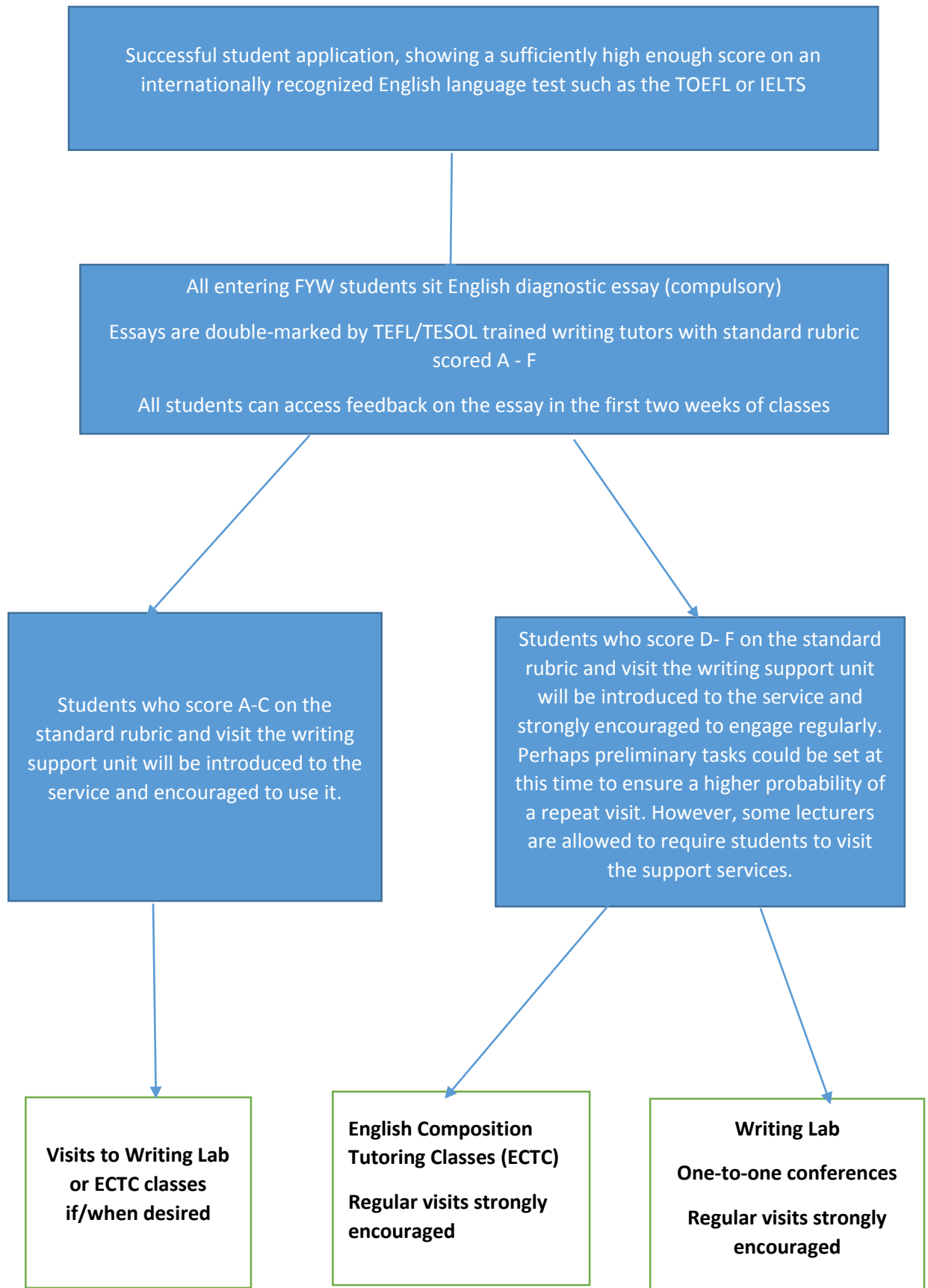
Academic research involving students in an Anglophonic context have included student focus groups to gain deeper knowledge of issues that directly affect students. This study does not employ focus groups for reasons best highlighted by DePalma and Ringer (2012) who believe that focus groups might prove more beneficial for *graduates* who can reflect, but this would not be the case for undergraduates, especially first-year writers upon whom this study is based, “focus group participants would need to be selected carefully. Participants, whether native English speakers or multilingual students, would need to have an awareness of and language for talking

about how they negotiate the demands of shifting from one context to another. Our assumption is that advanced students or recent graduates would have a better-developed awareness and language than less experienced students” (53).

In Aljoe’s experience of attempting to record the reflective views of students at this first-year level of study, DePalma and Ringer have been proven correct. This is why focus groups have not been used for this study. It still remains to be seen whether researchers could find a practical way to organize a focus group comprising students at this level in order to add to knowledge in this field. This is another limitation of this study, which lends itself to further research elsewhere. It is hoped that what is presented here will provide inspiration to researchers to experiment with finding methods to make the study of such focus groups possible in future research.

The following diagram depicts the process by which students are introduced to the writing support facilities at UNYP. The process is one which developed over the period of this study and is the result of work undertaken by stakeholders within academia guided by Aljoe, administrative and managerial staff at the University. It serves to illustrate that through early detection interventions can be progressed, increasing the chances of student success and therefore likely curtailing rates of withdrawal.

Diagram showing the process through which students access the writing support services at UNYP.



III. Five Themes in the Study of University Writing Support in Non-Anglophone Contexts

A. Accreditation and the Provision of University Writing Support

The examination of the link between accreditation and university writing support is one that Aljoe happened upon almost by pure chance. In researching how to establish a writing support unit, the link between these two entities became clear. This important link was discovered as a result of attempting to distinguish differences between accredited universities and 'degree mills'. An overview of bachelor degree programs taught in English in Europe contains a mix of both types of institutions. The concept of quality control through accreditation is continually highlighted by researchers (Perley and Tanguay, 2008; McGuire, 2009; Eaton, 2009; Fredericks Volkwein, 2009).

In terms of measuring institutional effectiveness, Volkwein (2010) identifies three competing philosophies each emphasizing a specific approach to assessment of efficiency. These included the resource/reputation model that focuses on rather superficial aspects of an institution, the client-centered approach that concentrates on increasing the satisfaction of students by offering the greatest number of student services possible, and the strategic or cost-benefit investment approach where "new initiatives are evaluated in light of its perceived payoff" (10). Justification for the introduction of a writing support facility within English-medium universities outside of English-speaking contexts seems to sit well within all of these philosophical approaches.

The native-English speaking student population attending private American universities in non-Anglophone contexts is relatively small in many instances and almost non-existent in others. In these circumstances writing centers are critical inclusions within the range of student facilities offered by universities. They may offer virtually the only forum outside of the classroom where students can practice expressing themselves orally in the target language in order to gain better marks on writing assignments, to apply for jobs, or simply to refine conversation skills. Research carried out by Liebowitz and Goodman (1997), Gordon (2008) and Matsuda *et al.* (2011) seems to confirm this.

One facet of accreditation is the necessity for institutions to provide student facilities outside of the classroom to facilitate academic progress. Outside of a library, a student led study/reading group, or an unstructured, impromptu group of peers, there is virtually no other forum to receive input or advice of an academic nature. Brauer (2004) believes that this type of Anglophone university accommodation needs to be presented in such a way that students feel they are not being singled out as a result of academic weakness. In an effort to evaluate the effectiveness of writing centers in some quantifiable way, methods have evolved to measure the perceived

usefulness of a writing center through feedback questionnaires requested of students who use the facility.

In a non-Anglophone context, a brief Internet search of the available bachelor degree programs taught in English at private universities will yield hundreds of results containing both accredited and non-accredited institutions. Recognized accreditation, a universal indicator of quality student outcomes, seems to be highly correlated to the existence of writing support units at many English-medium universities globally. Degree mills, which commonly sell degree certificates for a relatively low price and take a shorter time to complete, have three important drawbacks for students who are unwittingly drawn into enrolling in such programs. "They demean the value of learning and the importance of educational standards by treating degrees only as a commodity to be bought and sold, [they] defraud individuals who are misled by the promises of the purported school that the degree will have some value, bogus degrees present a danger to the public, [and, more importantly,] degree mills are unfair to the millions of individuals who have worked hard to earn legitimate degrees" (Council for Higher Education Accreditation - CHEA, 2005). Fortunately, due to the distinct differences in time and effort necessary to gain a recognized degree at degree mills and accredited universities, many who seek to enroll in higher education can determine which programs and institutions are authentic and which are not.

Accreditation within higher education serves as a guarantee of sorts of a standard quality education which involves a range of factors. The current president of the Council for Higher Education Accreditation further asserts the historical preponderance of accreditation. "Emerging from concerns to protect public health, safety and to serve the public interest, US accreditation is a process of external quality review created and used by higher education to scrutinize colleges, universities and programs for quality assurance and quality improvement and is more than a hundred years old" (Eaton, 2009). Seemingly, within academia and beyond recognition of higher education institutions by accrediting authorities is generally perceived as a 'gold standard'. One could argue that the concept of education seen as 'gold standard' can be challenged because obtaining such accreditation may be viewed as designed to satisfy the educational consumer demand. Consequently, the accreditation may also be considered a mere 'stamp of approval' to satisfy consumer demand in a competitive and profit motivated environment. In fact, the CHEA in the US is considered to be a *bona fide* organization which validates standards of degree generating higher education private and public institutions in the US and its territories. The CHEA provide educational quality assurance standards which promote excellence in education and is designed to facilitate educational research and innovation.

By offering writing support services to students, teaching faculty and university administrators show that they focus not only on student outcomes, but also on student experience a point deemed considerably important to Fredericks Volkwein (2009), and which seems to be a

developing trend in higher education today, a conclusion reached by both Fredericks Volkwein, (2009) and Bucalos (2014) and is a critical aspect of the accreditation process and its maintenance. Writing support tutors are likely also members of academic FYW teaching faculty, as is the case at UNYP and other higher education institutions in non-Anglophone locations, direct involvement in the accreditation process seems to fit well within the purview of accrediting body concerns regarding faculty involvement in the experiences of student learning. Aljoe (Aug, 2015) examines (appendix 4) the role between writing centers and university accreditation, making a case for universities to include this service for students as a means of complying with stringent accreditation policies.

Within the framework of adaptive transfer, accreditation concerns are primarily actor-oriented. Many MLL students, upon applying and entering English-medium universities, can be unaware of the existence (and importance) of accreditation and what it means within higher education. However, DePalma and Ringer (2012) reveal the traits of adaptive transfer involve the students who undertake academic study at an English-medium university, whether or not it is located in an Anglophonic context and includes MLLs and NES students (46-47). When a student enrolls in an accredited English-medium degree course at a private university, the institution then becomes obligated to deliver quality tuition and services. Actor-oriented suggests that because the student has paid the required tuition, they reserve the right to make an educational claim at an accredited university. "In order for rights to translate into reality , a broadened understanding of human rights accountability that goes beyond state structures to broader engagement with private sector institutions and civil society organizations is necessary" (Nyamu-Musembi, 2005).

Consequently, aspects within an adaptive transfer framework appear to aid understanding of the link between maintaining accreditation and the provision of university writing support services, using the concept of an actor-oriented approach. Regarding accreditation, DePalma and Ringer's (2012) six traits of adaptive transfer seem to support McGuire's (2009) assertion that accreditation processes are designed "to drive institutional change" (29). The application of the framework to the provision of writing support at accredited institutions will likely lead to improvements in services that could positively impact student outcomes generally. Therefore it can be argued that writing support tutors may find their involvement in institutional accreditation processes fruitful for support service and for the wider academic community.

As Aljoe (Aug, 2015) confirms (appendix 4) in the conference paper highlighting the link between accreditation and writing support, "Middle States Council for Higher Education (MSCHE) is the authority most commonly associated with the accreditation of overseas American universities. In order for an institution to receive and maintain accreditation according to the policy guidelines established by the MSCHE, it must 'demonstrate a quantifiable commitment to focusing continually on...continuous improvement beyond minimal compliance...to establish a culture and

processes that not only ensure their quality but also support continuous improvement' (*Becoming Accredited*). Establishing professionally staffed writing centers at accredited US associate institutions in non-English contexts would be one way to fulfill a requirement in order to retain or renew accreditation status". In fact, it has become clear since the last accreditation renewal process site visit, UNYP's writing support services were a critical asset to the University and positively impacted the renewal of its MSCHE accredited status.

What becomes clear through a basic Internet search is that the provision of writing support services such as a writing lab only seem to exist at universities with US and/or UK accredited degree programs. Aljoe (Aug, 2015) concludes (appendix 4) that the profile of writing support services rises in its inclusion of the accreditation process. Moreover, Aljoe supports the idea of writing support services to be staffed by TEFL trained tutors to best serve the international student who attends university in a non-Anglophone context. This last point certainly requires further research, as it reflects Aljoe's professional experience, but lies outside the focus of this study.

Aljoe's (Aug, 2015) highlighting (appendix 4) of the importance of accreditation is significant in today's tertiary international educational landscape. Particularly in locations which host English-medium programs outside of an Anglophone context, being aware of the differences between recognized accredited institutions and so called 'degree mills' can tremendously impact an academic and / or a professional career. Students attending university in this context should be made aware of this crucial difference before undertaking study, but tutors have a duty to remind students of this critical point.

B. Assessment of University Level Writing Support

Assessment is an integral part of accreditation. The previous theme discussed how a university's provision of writing support units might beneficially impact an institution's accreditation profile. The theme of assessment will now focus on the evaluation of the writing support service itself within the institution it serves. Both main types of assessments are performed through a variety of approaches to present an accurate profile of a writing support service. Summative assessment provides data to evaluate the efficacy of the service, and formative assessment where students are asked to comment on writing support provided so that improvements can be made to the service. In fact, due to the many participants involved in the service of tutoring, evaluation can be a more complex undertaking. Law and Murphy (1997), Donnelly and Garrison (2003) and Thompson (2006) have emphasized the need for more formative evaluation of writing support. Aljoe (Oct, 2015) presents (appendix 2) a pre-designed heuristic which might be useful for writing support directors to evaluate and improve their services.

The six different types of writing support evaluation reflect the perspectives of various stakeholders within the institution that the support service was made to accommodate (Worthen and Sanders, 1987; Bell, 2000). Those types being:

- a consumer oriented approach which measures the satisfaction of clients or users of the services;
- an adversarial approach to assessment attempts to problematize writing support and presents opposition to its existence as being a benefit to the institution it serves;
- a management oriented approach, where data is collected in order to make decisions about the functioning of services;
- Naturalistic and participant-oriented approaches measure a writing support service as it is tailored to the institution it serves, focusing on the context within which the writing support is based;
- an expertise based approach requires that experts in the field of writing support take on the duty of measuring its value to an institution;
- an objectives oriented approach which measures the degree to which goals that the services sets out to meet are actually achieved (Worthen and Sanders, 1987; Bell, 2000).

Thus, the efforts to evaluate writing support services are evident. Yet, to select just one of these approaches is clearly not enough to evaluate writing support, rather a combination of approaches would seem necessary to reveal a complete picture of the value of services in any given context.

Writing support evaluation is a rather complex but necessary process. This complexity reveals that there are generally two views that must be taken into consideration when evaluating services for students and the institutions the writing support serves. Writing support researchers, Fallon and Rafoth (2013) have divided these into internal and external views; examining what happens in conference sessions between the tutor and those being tutored as opposed to how best the service itself is serving the institution where it resides. Combining these views should provide practitioners with an idea of whether or not writing support services are effective. It should be noted that research pertaining to evaluations of centers covers mainly Anglophone contexts, which is why Aljoe chose to explore the topic of writing support assessment further.

With the many options of assessment possible, how then can a writing support coordinator assess this service in a non-Anglophone context, using a straight-forward evaluator that addresses the concerns raised by the six types of evaluation listed above? A less time consuming way to assess writing support might be through the use of direct questions rather than using an approach-based method. Not that the approach-based format is erroneous, but, as previously stated, a combination of approaches would be more suitable and this could be quite time consuming. Aljoe (Oct, 2015) presents (appendix 2) a modified version of the direct inquiry

method, developed in an Anglophone context, may produce results that, according to Welch and Revels-Parker (2012) would, “show the center’s effectiveness at helping to improve student writing, at helping to increase a student’s confidence about writing, at offering excellent professional development to the tutors and to the graduate assistant, at satisfying the needs of both students who use the center and the faculty who send them there, and at showing increasing amounts of usage to indicate positive growth”. Aljoe (Oct, 2015) can confirm (appendix 2) that with minor adjustments, the Welch and Revels-Parker heuristic can be useful in both the assessment of services and program accreditation processes.

Using heuristics developed by Welch and Revels-Parker (2012) combined with two separate small –scale writing lab surveys of UNYP teaching staff and students, an assessment was made of the writing support services offered at a private, US accredited English-medium University in the capital city, Prague, Czech Republic. This assessment helped to inform the practices currently employed by writing support services at the University of New York in Prague.

In their argument for changing the approach to assessment of writing support units, Welch and Revels-Parker (2012) provide seven key questions for designing a pilot for assessment. The questions are as follows:

- 1) “Who should be in charge of the assessment at you institution?
 - 2) What kinds of challenges does your writing [support unit] face?
 - 3) What are your goals for the assessment?
 - 4) What is the mission of the writing [support unit]?
 - 5) What kinds of data do you already collect and how useful is it useful for measuring the outcomes you define?
 - 6) How can you partner with your own Office of Assessment and Institutional Research to establish a plan, collect needed data, and analyze results?
 - 7) How can you publish the results to help others and to be rewarded for your work?
- (Welch and Revels-Parker 2012)

Welch and Revels-Parker (2012) focus their study on a writing support unit located at a public university in Virginia, which had an Office of Assessment and Institutional Research (OAIR). The university writing support facility involved in this small case study is located in a European non-Anglophone context, which is a situation that tends to be less well researched than Anglophone support units in the United States. Any decisions about assessment within the university are made by the management only. However, in the study done by Welch and Revels-Parker (2012), their OAIR “put faculty in charge of assessments in order to use the experience and expertise of faculty with the subject area in question to create a logical, usable assessment.” In the same way,

the management of UNYP in Czech Republic, which is the focus of this study, has made faculty, staff and students partially responsible for assessments for the same reasons. This shared responsibility of assessment provides management with a form of triangulated information upon which to make more informed decisions about the running of the university as a whole.

DePalma and Ringer's (2012) principles of adaptive transfer encourage writing support directors to re-use what has gone before in an effort to determine the way forward. For the study of UNYP's writing support services, Aljoe (Oct, 2015) adapted (appendix 2) the Welch Revels-Parker pilot heuristic of seven direct questions to inform the management to develop a varied form of writing support in the form of English Composition Tutoring Class (ECTC). A writing support unit in the form of a writing lab or center which offers one-to-one conferences between students and the writing tutor, and is heavily based on the Anglophonic model of writing support tutoring, had been in operation for more than a year. The relevant characteristics of adaptive transfer evident in the review that facilitated this addition to the established service are dynamic, idiosyncratic, cross-contextual, multilingual and transformative. However, instead of using this framework to refer to the students' who transfer their skills from one arena to another, it is the director/tutor of writing support and management of UNYP who fit into this theoretical construct.

Using this particular pre-designed heuristic is important as it can be used in a global context with minor modifications to suit each academy. Its simplicity encourages its application and the results achieved will likely point to improvements in writing support provision. As Aljoe (Oct. 2015) asserts (appendix 2), when stakeholders of an English-medium university are involved in the evaluation of its writing support facilities, the likelihood of resources being allocated to that support increase.

C. Student motivation and University Level writing support

The most significant difference between university writing support in Anglophone contexts and that which is located in non-Anglophone contexts exists in the mindset of students attending universities in both contexts. There is a striking divide, especially with regards to MLLs who are required to achieve a sufficiently high enough score to enter an English-medium program in either context. Considering that NNES students who enroll in tertiary study in a context where English is spoken both inside and outside the classroom, there are constant English language inputs which likely have the effect of maintaining and improving language skills. NNES students in this context are often mainstreamed with NES students and, in many cases, form a minority of learners in many courses.

Encouraging MLLs students to seek writing support in non-Anglophone contexts proves challenging. In fact, Gray (2013) believes these students cannot be treated in the same way a traditional student operating in an Anglophone context would be, because MLLs are non-

traditional students due to their international background, therefore they may need to be approached differently. When writing center researcher Gerd Brauer (2004) attempted to introduce the US model of a writing center at a German university in 1994, he encountered much resistance because this type of facility seemed foreign in a European context. Still today, NNES students who are unfamiliar with the prospect of receiving extra-curricular assistance with assignments will find the provision of writing support strange. This means that writing tutors need to advertise their services more rigorously in a non-Anglophonic context and devise alternative forums of support. Aljoe (2014) underscores (appendix 3) this point of raising the profile of writing support initiatives in an article which focuses mainly on listing activities that writing tutors can do to encourage students to seek a conference to discuss writing assignments.

After the UNYP Writing Lab had been in operation for one year, it became clear that another form of support was necessary to address management's concern that the Writing Lab, as pleasant as it was to have one, could not provide enough support to curb failure rates, therefore another writing support solution had to be found. Although the writing lab was a welcome addition to the facilities offered by the university, it did not seem to have the noticeable effect of reducing failure rates in English Composition. In brief, a way had to be found for writing support to accommodate a greater number of students.

The solution came in the offer of a non-credit English Composition Tutoring Class (ECTC) for students to attend on a voluntary basis. The ECTC operated in virtually the same manner as a traditional one-to-one tutoring session in the writing lab, but allowed many students to obtain writing support with a tutor in a classroom environment. The ECTC was given a permanent time slot in the daily schedule of university courses, and students could attend individually, in pairs, or in small groups. Again, the ECTC was the responsibility of one professionally trained tutor, but students did not work together in one cohesive group as would happen in a traditional classroom or seminar.

Race (2011) highlights the importance of helping students to "desire success", but Cohen, Ferrell Justice and Dempsey (2014) warn that non-US born students "were less at ease participating in discussions... [And] had a statistically lower level of confidence in communication" (241). Their assertion that cultural backgrounds impact learning behavior means that writing support offered in non-Anglophonic contexts needs to be promoted differently to students who are unfamiliar with such facilities. "Encouraging First-Year, NNES University Students to Seek Writing Support in Non-Anglophone Contexts" (Aljoe, 2014) shows that reducing FYW resistance to seek help with writing can be considerably challenging, which confirms findings by Cohen, Ferrell Justice and Dempsey (2014).

Increasingly, universities in Anglophonic contexts are *requiring* students to visit writing support facilities on campus at least once for an introductory consultation. Researchers have highlighted

that “the least proficient NNES students benefit the most from mandated writing support, that such support is beneficial to all levels of NNES students, and that the [writing support services] contribute in demonstrable ways to successful student learning outcomes” (Boyd and Mohamad 2011). As part of a writing course or under direct instruction from a lecturer, students are no longer simply being encouraged to visit writing tutors on a voluntary basis, a visit is now becoming a necessary part of a course curriculum. At UNYP this required visit has also been added as an obligation for first year students. This has had the effect of popularizing the writing support services on offer, and, more importantly, it reflects Ronesi’s (1995) recognition that “the potential of unlimited development in writing exists for ESL students who regularly visit the writing center”.

First-year students attending English medium universities in non-English-speaking localities can be encouraged to seek help with their writing assignments by their instructors and writing tutors. Most important in attracting students to writing support is the staff that students will meet when they arrive for a conference. Encouragement and enthusiasm expressed by a tutor feeds directly into student motivation. Race (2011) highlights the importance of helping students to “desire success.” When instructors and writing tutors make clear to students from the beginning of and throughout the school year that the ability to produce acceptable academic writing requires much practice, and that NES students also have great difficulty in this area, NNES students may gain the confidence to rise to challenges they may encounter in academic writing classes such as English Composition. It is important that instructors and students fuel this desire to learn throughout the semester. Continual questioning on subject knowledge is one way to achieve this. However, Race (2011) logically points out that checking student motivational factors only at the end of a module or semester is simply too late.

Before the initiation of required student visits at UNYP, the Writing Lab had far fewer visitors. The types of visitor to the writing support unit consisted of students with previous knowledge of writing support and those who were taking academic writing classes with the writing support tutor, who was the students’ academic writing instructor. The students who had experience of writing support had likely attended high school in an American context or a secondary school in the UK or a British context. These students were eager for a one-to-one session with the tutor and were usually well prepared and equipped with instructor specifications for assignments, rough drafts of attempts they had made at fulfilling the assignment and a list of specific questions for the tutor. These were sessions where students benefitted from being able to discuss assignments with a tutor of some academic standing and receive reasonable feedback.

Setting a university policy which requires students to engage with writing support facilities at least once at the beginning of the semester in order that writing tutors can introduce writing support services to students who would otherwise not use them, represents an attempt not only to

democratize access to the facility, but also to encourage future and regular student visits. Aljoe's (2016) article on the gamification of writing support can be viewed as one way to encourage regular visits to the writing support unit.

The six characteristics of adaptive transfer as defined and described by DePalma and Ringer in 2012 are reflected in aspects of student motivation to take advantage of writing support in the first year of university studies. Researchers have already pointed to three aspects of adaptive transfer to describe the skills developed when engaging in L2 writing at university level. These characteristics are *idiosyncratic*, *rhetorical* and *cross-contextual* (Leki, 1995; DePalma and Ringer 2012). First-year writing students come to university with the weight of their cultural and educational background along with their unique learning style. Rhetorically, many will have some understanding of standard expectations within a tertiary academic experience, based on the tests of English language proficiency required to gain entry to the university. In the same vein, students will naturally bring previous language learning into their new academic environment, allowing them to build on that existing knowledge. In an effort to expand the framework of adaptive transfer, it becomes clear that the other three characteristics are applicable also.

The first of the three remaining characteristics of adaptive transfer is *dynamism*. This is quite close to the *cross-contextual* trait named above, but rather than simply reusing the learned writing practices in their writing practice, they are reshaping their writing. With regard to MLLs, Hall (2009) asserts, "they've had the experience of learning a new language at least once, and if they first learned to read and write in an alternate educational system, then they have already made a successful adaptation to the [Anglophone] system" (41). This is where Hall believes MLLs have an advantage over native English speakers at the same level of learning. What may be more accurate is that this advantage would depend on too many other variables including students' backgrounds and education level upon commencement of a first-year university writing course to apply only to MLLs. In the experience of Aljoe, adaptive transfer's dynamic trait applies to both non-native and native-English speakers.

The second characteristic of an expanded adaptive transfer framework, missing from Leki's (1995), but included DePalma and Ringer's (2012) work which can be applied to the current study of UNYP students is *multilingual*, recognizing "the agency of writers to draw from among a variety of discourses and languages in order to influence contexts of writing" (DePalma and Ringer, 2012 p. 47). Here, MLLs and NES students experience the opposing effects of exposure to multilingualism. Where MLLs are learning in English at a university in a non-Anglophone context are challenged by the limited exposure to the target language which is limited to the classroom and other activities based on campus, native-speakers studying in a non-Anglophone location face an opposite and unequal limitation. Native speakers also in the first year of university study are influenced to some degree by the limitation of being exposed to language only as it exists

within the academy. Once classes are finished, students cease the amount of higher level Anglophone linguistic input just as NNES students do. The primary difference being the varying degrees of knowledge of the non-Anglophone academic environment.

The third trait of adaptive transfer that both MLLs and NES students experience when learning in English in an academy located in a non-Anglophone context is *transformative*. This trait can be expanded to include both groups of students in this unique context because according to DePalma and Ringer (2012), it involves the introduction of “new ways of seeing, doing, or knowing into writing practice” (p. 47). Hall’s (2009) work supports this idea, although he focuses on MLLs attending university in an American context, he admits, “All students, not just MLLs, may experience a falling-off, usually temporary, in their writing skills when they are asked to produce documents in a new genre or a new discipline, especially when more advanced cognitive demands are being made of them at the same time” (p. 40). Most students are being introduced to a ‘new’ way of writing within academia in their freshman year of university study.

Although the characteristics within the framework of adaptive transfer can be extended to include both MLLs and NES students, cultural considerations of both groups of students should also be included. In different ways, students at English-medium universities in non-Anglophone contexts are encountering what Sociologists Donald Light Jr. and Suzanne Keller (1985) refer to as *diffusion*, where students from varying backgrounds are exposed to “a gradual dissemination of [academic certainly, and social] cultural traits... [...and] the extent to which diffusion occurs will vary” (p. 516). Therefore, a link can be made between students motivation to succeed or, at the very least, complete a program of study in English, can also vary as students select that information within a course which will help them to achieve a particular end. Following Light Jr. and Keller, Aljoe (2014) concludes (appendix 3) that cultural considerations are far more relevant in the provision of writing support for international students, particularly in contexts where English is not the locally spoken language.

With regard to writing support in non-Anglophonic contexts, rather than, as Hall (2013) suggests, “writing center directors and higher administrators should advocate for an even more dramatic solution: a resource center dedicated to NNES writers,” Aljoe advocates for an inclusive approach of having one writing center for both NNES and NES writers. Aljoe has found that both groups of students are more adequately accommodated and prepared for professional life when students’ commonalities are foregrounded, rather than finding ways to separate and distinguish them from each other. DePalma and Ringer’s (2012) adaptive transfer also seems to support this. An inclusive approach would have the tutor of writing support in non-Anglophonic contexts trained to deal with both groups simultaneously. This type of organization accommodates fully the adaptive transfer characteristics which all students experience in this unique learning context.

The significance of focusing on student motivation is primarily due to the non-Anglophone context. Aljoe (2014) points out (appendix 3) that students functioning at universities in Anglophone contexts are more likely to perceive writing support services as an important part of the tertiary-level educational experience. Therefore, NES and NNES students in a non-Anglophone context will most likely require far more encouragement to engage. As was and is the case at UNYP.

D. Reflective Practice and Writing Support

An extraordinary development at UNYP was the management's implementation of an English Composition Tutoring Class (ECTC) as an extension of the writing support service, running in tandem with the conventional one-to-one Writing Lab tutoring that had already been in place for two years. Briefly, the major similarities between UNYP's writing Lab and the ECTC are that both are staffed with TEFL or TESOL trained instructors and both are considered writing support services offered without additional charge to students enrolled at the university. Two further similarities are that students are guided individually and can voluntarily elect to attend sessions or be directed to visit by a member of the teaching faculty. The differences between these services take into account the varying backgrounds of enrolled students, which makes the writing services unique to UNYP. Appendix one shows how Aljoe's (Feb. 2015) reflective practice led to necessary changes in the provision of writing support at the University.

At accredited universities in Europe and other Anglophone locations, students are required to attend seminar classes or workshops in conjunction with lectures. At UNYP, a private accredited institution, writing courses are conducted in the same way as seminars and workshops, where student and teacher interaction is emphasized and rigorously practiced. The forum of a lecture hall of 100+ students, taking notes from a lecturer does not exist. Writing or Composition class sizes are kept to a minimum, because writing instruction is considered of utmost importance for majority NNES students engaged in WAC and/or WID and learning in English. Therefore, an ECTC was introduced to reflect the lecture/ seminar traditional combination. The main difference between the ECTC and a seminar is that in the ECTC the writing tutor floats between desks of students, working individually on different aspects of language. So, beyond a one-to-one conference which is found in a writing lab one-to-one conference between a student and a tutor, the ECTC sets the tutor in a classroom where students can work in smaller groups or individually on aspects of academic writing.

Aljoe's (Sep. 2015) article entitled, "Toward an Alternative to the Traditional Writing Center Model" argues (appendix 6) strongly in favor of replacing one-to-one conference conventions with the one-to-many ECTC model in order to best suit a European context, if only one type of support service is viable. This would accommodate students who are reluctant to engage with the traditional writing tutor-and-student consultation model. Students' reluctance can stem from a

variety of reasons, including unfamiliarity with such services and fear of being labelled or stigmatized as remedial. The provision of the ECTC counterbalances traditional one-to-one tutoring, especially in non-Anglophone contexts.

The development of writing support at UNYP is the result of the combination of reflective practice by the management of the university, English Composition teaching faculty including the Writing Lab director and students. This type of triangulation is encouraged by Thonus (2001) who believes that “the primary role of writing programs and writing centers... should be not only to mediate between faculty and tutees but also to educate both faculty and tutees in the complementary role of writing tutors in the pursuit of excellence in academic writing.” Since the first writing support was offered at UNYP in 2009, the service has developed to incorporate learning style preferences of students from different cultural backgrounds. Writing support has moved from a corner of the library to its own enclosed office space and then in addition to a classroom setting. Presently, there are two tutors who convene with students on a one-to-one basis in the traditional writing lab. There is also the ECTC which has enjoyed a measure of success due to its differing format, allowing individuals and groups of students to practice writing together in one classroom.

Adaptive transfer’s theoretical framework accommodates reflective practice in writing support provision at accredited English-medium higher education in non-Anglophone contexts, thereby expanding DePalma and Ringer’s (2012) theory beyond the students to both the tutors of writing support and executive-level administrators. The dynamic trait describes how, as a writing support director, tutoring practices are reformed based on student and institutional requirements. Idiosyncratically, a tutor’s training in foreign language teaching is critical to the efficiency of writing support tutoring. TESOL or TEFL training also reflects the cross-contextual trait, as this previous knowledge influences the development of the service and how that service is perceived by others in the academy. Rhetorically, the basic principles of providing the most effective service for students is a paramount concern. As the students are both mono- and multilingual, so should the tutor attempt to be in order to fully appreciate the struggle that many students have in acquisition of not only new language, but the specific skills within that language that students must learn and apply in a new academic setting. Finally, the transformative trait is reflected in how the tutor is introduced to new ways of envisioning current and future practices within the field.

Gibb (1988) is one of the most commonly referenced researchers when discussing reflective practice in education. As adaptive transfer has characteristics, Gibb’s reflective practice cycle mirrors transfer with specific questions to analyze programs such as writing support. Staying with the order of adaptive transfer framework’s characteristics listed by DePalma and Ringer (2012), we see the correlations exist between the two in a similar order. Where Gibb (1988) asks, “What

happened?” reflects dynamism; where Gibb (1988) asks, “What were you thinking and feeling?” echoes the idiosyncratic trait; where Gibb (1988) questions, “What was good and bad about the situation?” follows the cross-contextual trait of adaptive transfer; where Gibb (1988) asks, “What sense can I make of the situation?” mirrors the rhetorical trait; where Gibb (1988) asks, “What else could you have done?” reflects the multilingual characteristic of adaptive transfer in that the tutor must have the ability to view assistance given to students both through the perspective of the student’s culture and the tutor’s. Finally, the transformative trait of adaptive transfer mirrors Gibb’s (1988) question, “What would you do if it [= a problem or issue within a tutoring situation or with the provision of services] arose again?” This shows how the framework of adaptive transfer can be extended to include the reflective-practice experience of writing support tutors and directors.

Aljoe (Feb, 2015) illustrates (appendix 1) that reflective practice can be achieved on many levels within research and within professional practice, from the establishment of a support service to the daily administration of it, the job of the writing support founder and head tutor at UNYP encompasses a wide range of duties and responsibilities. The importance of what the writing support units do to standardize and improve the abilities of students who are engaged with writing across the curriculum (WAC) and writing in the disciplines (WID) cannot be understated. As Muriel “Mickey” Harris, a leader in the writing center movement, asserts, “One of the important outcomes of institutional research done by a writing center administrator is that the writing center becomes an effective, integral part of its campus. It serves that institution and that institution’s students and faculty. As asserted in appendix 4, a writing center [=support unit] actively involved in molding itself to the institution and furthering the work of that institution is therefore not some generic learning assistance program...” (Harris, 86, quoted in Fallon and Rafoth).

Contrary to my initial expectations, initiating a writing center was a great challenge but not insurmountable. The different approaches to writing support which need to be taken to assist students studying in English in a non-Anglophonic context are of considerable importance. Constant innovation based on multi-formatted suggestions from specialist guides, students, other instructors and administrators has proven useful in the endurance of writing centers globally. By enthusiastically advertising the existence of the center, the tutor can promote the center to students who are unfamiliar and/or may not have visited otherwise.

The data collected in the first year of the university’s writing center was sufficient to glean useful insights into its performance. However, there is a constant need to review and refine student feedback methods. A general survey of all students and teaching staff at the beginning and/or end of semesters not only provides further understanding of student perceptions of the writing support offered, but the positive attitude and support of the teaching staff also serve as another form of writing center promotion.

In terms of the action research process, reflective practice is highly significant, which is why Aljoe (Feb. 2015) focuses (appendix 1) on this. Reflective practice formed the inspiration for this study. Had the initial writing support unit functioned as it would do in an Anglophone context, from its inception, this report would not have been necessary. That so many differences were identified in the development of the writing support unit in this particular geographical context makes this report invaluable to current and future writing support tutors.

E. Toward Alternative Uses of Technology in Writing Support Provision

The use of technology in writing support at accredited universities is not a new phenomenon. Many, if not, all campuses tend to offer a way for students to request help with written assignments through an electronic service. However, researchers seem to have some issues, including ownership and inclusion with this type of writing support (Healy and Clark, 1996; Bouquet, 1999; Palmquist, 2003; Elmborg and Hook 2005; Moberg 2010; Harrington 2010). The adaption of technology in writing support takes many forms; from grammar and style analysis software programs to use of the Internet for distant learning programs. Students, teaching faculty, tutors and administrators in education use electronic assistance in various ways for university studies. Generally, the use of technology in this context is accepted and, in many cases, expected in the 21st century.

Where issues abound with the use of technology is in the ethical and efficient use of this type of assistance. Considering the many ways that technology and the use of computers impacts the work done at universities, it is important to limit this enquiry to that which directly connects students, writing tutors, teaching faculty and administrators with the services of writing support units located on campuses where courses are taught in English. In other words, the focus of this study resides within the function of providing the assistance that FYW students request with their assignments at UNYP. It is clear that in today's universities, students see the use of the computers to write and research assignments, even hand held devices, as tools, in the same way as yesteryear's student saw the scientific calculator as necessary to complete higher-level branches of mathematics. In fact, the use of hand-held smart phones is currently so wide-spread that official student evaluations of courses, student support services such as writing support and lecturers at UNYP are done mostly via a smart phone apparatus. To this extent, it is clear that technology will take center stage within academia as it has within many other aspects of life.

Fortunately, UNYP's writing support units came into existence during the technological age, so the threat of face-to-face consultations disappearing due to advancements in technology has lessened. This reflects a "blended" approach an assertion made by Moberg (2010), "The use of both online and brick and mortar service delivery models allows programs and institutions to accentuate the advantages of each and accommodate for the weaknesses" (p. 2). The "blended" approach is also supported by Harrington (2010). A balance of sorts has been struck between the

practical uses of technology and the practicalities of one-to-one or one-to-many, as in the ECTC, conferences. The place of technology within the support services is an assured one, as writing tutors and students use their personal computers and Web connections in a number of significant and important ways when engaged in student conferences. Far from replacing the tutor with electronic writing assistance, UNYP has found a way to enhance writing support services for students, using the available technology.

Tutors are able to show students ways of using technology by, for example, accessing sources that may help with writing assignments. It is important to note that in the experience of Aljoe, students have had to be shown how to use computers in English. Meaning, students are having to be shown how to change the language setting to English in order to complete written assignments for courses, so that an English grammar and spell-check application can be used for final checking and submission. Furthermore, tutors can guide students to the best sites to practice aspects of written language such as grammar and syntax. Tutors are also useful in showing students how to find and evaluate reference materials for research assignments across the academic curriculum and within the different disciplines.

A novel approach that writing support tutors can use to motivate students using advances in computer technology would be to incorporate the features of video game design into writing support visits. In line with Ede and Lunsford's (2000) advocacy for educational reform, Aljoe (2016) has argued (appendix 7) in "The Gamification of Writing Support in Non-Anglophone Contexts," rather than viewing video gaming as detrimental to learning, which is a commonly held notion about gaming, writing tutors can use characteristics such as creating high score challenges, increasing motivation to progress to the next level, role-playing, making new discoveries and providing opportunities to build relationships and raise intrinsic motivation levels. This alternative use of video game design may attract and encourage more students who are unfamiliar with writing support services to engage with writing support services on a regular basis and, more importantly, to view writing as the process that it is.

The practice model developed for use by writing support tutors for students attending English-medium universities in non-Anglophone locations includes 15 tasks which are listed on one side of an A4 sheet of paper. The model can be digitized and uploaded to a university server, making it more easily accessible for those who prefer that format. There are seven categories of language practice represented in chart form including: short essays, long essays, senior or final year project, professional career, speaking practice (specific), reading practice and another speaking practice (general). Students should complete at least 12 of the 15 tasks listed in one semester. If the writing support unit budget allows, small prizes can be given to students who complete the 12 challenges listed per term.

The practice model integrates the characteristics of video game design in that to complete the challenge and win any potential prize, students must evidence the completion of five visits to the writing support unit for at least 12 of the 15 writing challenges listed. As students work through the challenges, visiting the writing tutor with each draft, students will familiarize themselves with writing support, taking away the cultural misconception of an admission of weakness on the part of the student. As some challenges refer to professional careers, students will be encouraged to think into their future and what happens after graduation. They can role-play professional interviews and give short presentations in the privacy of their writing support consultation with a tutor. Students are often encouraged by discovering how to do something well, and with the five visits required, students will be able to see their progression to mastery in varying degrees. Lastly, some students will likely 'play' the challenge in pairs or groups, adding an element of competition amongst each other to ratchet up the 'fun' aspect of the challenge. Progression can be posted online so that students can compare their progress with others.

Another recent development in the use of technology on campus is the disappearance of paper drafts of written assignments. When computers were first introduced, the use of paper drafts was abundant. Indeed, where we dreamt of the paperless office, it seemed offices produced more paper. Adults of a certain age may be able to recall when many electronic documents were reproduced on paper to ensure that a 'hard copy' was available somewhere for review, as computers were new and not a fully trusted way to store important data. The floppy disc as they used to be called has been superseded by cloud storage, which is easily accessible from any corner of the globe as long as a connection to a server can be established using any number of electronic devices available on the market today. Rather than bringing paper drafts of an assignment to the writing lab conference or the ECTC, students tend to arrive at support services with hand-held personal computers which can also access the Internet in a trice.

Once again, the characteristics of adaptive transfer can also be observed in and expanded to the use of technology by student visitors and tutors of writing support services at an English-medium universities in non-Anglophonic contexts. The reuse and reshaping of technological practices with computers, especially Web connected PCs echoes the dynamism of adaptive transfer. The use of educational and personal background and learning style where the use of technology is concerned reflects the idiosyncratic characteristic. Previous knowledge of computers applied to new situations reflects the cross-contextual trait. Understanding the basic principles of computer use in producing academic assignments within academia follows the rhetorical characteristic. The multilingual trait can be seen as students switch between languages programmed into their computers. And, lastly, students, when they approach the writing support services for assistance, are introduced to new ways of viewing their writing assignments through the use of technology by writing tutors.

As Aljoe (2016) asserts (appendix 7), the place and use of technology in writing support will become increasingly important, especially in the new millennium as first year writing programs welcome students who were born in the digital age. By tutors making clever use of aspects of video game design, our existence as writing support tutors and practitioners remains relevant and self-sustainable within the academy. As Ede and Lunsford (2000) have claimed, writing support units can serve as models of educational reform as the margins of support shift and change within institutions (p. 37). The technology available and that which is developed in future needs to be carefully integrated and effectively applied to keep writing support services at the center of the institutions they serve.

IV. Conclusion and Recommendations

A new and growing phenomenon in international English-medium university education is occurring. Increasingly, especially in non-Anglophonic contexts, MLLs and NNES students are being mainstreamed in the learning process with NES students. Rather than separating these two groups of students as Hall (2009) proposes, universities are finding novel ways of making the university experience equally fruitful for both while, according to Wright (2014) dispelling myths about MLLs and NNES. As students need to be able to communicate effectively in an academic community, writing support facilities are at the forefront of making this ambitious goal a reality from the first year of study. And, rather than supporting calls for separating the two groups of learners within the academy, this study supports the notion of distinguishing writing support units in Anglophone contexts from those that exist in non-Anglophone ones. As the popular saying goes, 'location is [almost] everything,' so different locations will require different approaches.

Due to the distinct contextual differences, issues and backgrounds of students and teaching faculty that are present in non-Anglophone locations, university level writing support facilities cannot operate in parallel with associate or parent institutions residing in Anglophone locations. Higher education in the 21st century is constantly in flux and institutions must be flexible in accommodating the needs of students, especially when it comes to one of the most important aspects of tertiary learning, which is the ability to write academically across the curriculum and within disciplinary subject areas. Many of the changes that need to be made in the provision of writing support in a non-Anglophonic contexts are currently in process, and should be reviewed regularly with a focus on identifying what constitutes best practice.

One way of achieving best practice in the area of WAC and WID is to apply and expand the main characteristics within the theoretical framework of adaptive transfer, as developed by DePalma and Ringer, to writing support on offer, thereby putting this framework into a definable and a workable format. It may also be useful to develop questions of writing support effectiveness in the reflective process. This report has shown how such application and expansion is possible in real time at an accredited English-medium university in the Czech Republic, but it remains to be seen if such practices can be applied in other such non-Anglophone contexts.

There exists the strong possibility that steps taken at UNYP to provide students wider access to writing support, such as the development of the ECTC, will be workable in other contexts, perhaps even in purely Anglophonic ones also, given that the landscape is changing in higher education in both contexts with regard to student linguistic ability upon entering the academy. However, this still remains to be evidenced through further research. This is partly why tutors working in non-Anglophone contexts are encouraged to record and share their experiences with

other practitioners in the field of writing support and its provision in unique contexts around the world.

Theorists such as Bandura and Krashen provide positivist constructs to aid understanding of how educational stakeholders interact with the writing support services and how it is perceived by its users: the students, teaching staff, writing tutors and management of the university. We have also observed and considered how adaptive transfer theory can be extended to writing support tutoring and its provision through the following themes: accreditation, assessment, student motivation, reflective practice and the alternative use of technology. DePalma and Ringer (2012) assert, “Adaptive transfer has significant implications for multilingual and NES writers across the curriculum and for the WAC programs [such as writing support facilities] that support them. It thus serves as a framework that can help WAC scholars and faculty adjust their practices in ways that effectively serve the growing population of multilingual learners in US higher education” (p. 61). Here is where theoretical and practical aspects of writing support provision meet.

With regards to institutional accreditation, writing support provision implies an institution’s desire to remain competitive in terms of academic standards when compared with other similar institutions. Considering that accreditation is not a one-time only event but an ongoing concern keeps academics, especially writing support tutors, aware of the changing educational landscape that we operate within. The addition of a writing support facility may benefit a university’s performance evaluation when its accreditation status is being sought or renewed. Aljoe has previously concluded in a paper accepted for conference presentation that, “MSCHE is the authority most commonly associated with the accreditation of overseas American universities. Aljoe (Sept, 2015) has found (appendix 6) that establishing professionally staffed writing centers at accredited US associate institutions in non-English contexts is one way to fulfill the ‘best practice’ requirement in order to retain or renew accreditation status.

Assessment, although closely linked to accreditation on an institutional level, for the purposes of this study, assessment refers not to the entire institution but only to the writing support service itself. Only through self and institutional assessment of the writing support services can they be developed to service the students that seek assistance there. Bell (2002) suggests going one step further by performing small-scale assessments within writing support by focusing on detailed aspects of support. “For example, instead of trying to evaluate all aspects of tutoring in one semester, the writing center could focus on one concern. A center might ask, for example, whether undergraduates who voluntarily visit the center make the revisions talked about in one-to-one conferences with trained and experienced peer tutors” (p. 16). However, as Aljoe (Oct. 2015) shows (appendix 2), more general assessments such as one suggested by Welch and

Revels-Parker (2012) and used at UNYP led to the addition of the ECTC, so this more detailed assessment might be more relevant in writing support units that have been functioning for a longer period of time. Considering that UNYP's writing support began in 2009, more time should be allowed to pass before making such an enquiry into writing support practices.

As previously stated, both NES and NNEST students have different motivations for completing a degree course in English. However, with regards to the provision of writing support, the forums of student and tutor contact should consider the cultural disparities between the two. As Light Jr. and Keller (1985) have established, *diffusion* occurs in varying degrees for students who are both accustomed and unaccustomed to writing support in English-medium degree programs. Both groups of students are dealing with cultural aspects that differ in ways to students who are studying in an Anglophone context. However, as the groups share the same spaces of learning, a guiding framework or adaptive transfer can help writing support tutors fashion conference practices that take account of their differences. In another conference paper that was peer-reviewed and accepted for publication as part of the proceedings, motivation to request assistance with writing is strongly linked to encouragement. Yet, as Aljoe (2014) can confirm (appendix 3), requiring FYW students to visit the writing support services can also serve as a form or level of encouragement, especially for students who are unfamiliar with the support service.

Reflective practice is seen as paramount in the delivery of targeted educational services for students (Evans, 2002). Using a fixed set of questions to guide tutor conferences within a support unit can greatly benefit the development of the unit as Aljoe (Feb. 2015) asserts (appendix 1) in "Reflections on the Establishment of English-medium University-level Writing Support in Non-Anglophone Contexts." For this study the fixed set of questions came from Gibb (1988), but have been used by those education practitioners who wish to develop their understanding and provision of services to students. Gibb's questions seem to mirror the characteristics within the framework of adaptive transfer and may provide writing tutors further insight into what constitutes best practice within their facilities. Through reflective practice tutors can further define functions and make connections across the academic curriculum (Brauer, 2004). One of the main factors that facilitated the introduction of the ECTC at UNYP was the report based on the reflective practice of the one-to-one writing tutor.

The last theme, currently developing at a seemingly faster rate than the others, is the exploration of alternative uses for technology within writing support. The digitization of writing support is quite a broad issue, taking many forms, depending on the perspectives of the tutor, the tutee and administrators. On a management level, students appraisal of services quickly reach the parts of

administration that are concerned with aspects of provision that are outside the remit of the tutor, allowing for change to take place at a faster rate than would be without it. A tutor's records of student interactions at all points of support are aided and more easily analyzed using available technology.

However, computers cannot and should not replace tutors, as tutors do the invaluable job of sitting down to discuss the many aspects of a college-level writing assignment. Students are encouraged to use the technology available to them in an ethical way and are introduced to further ways of accessing information on the Web in English, which might differ to the way that they would access information in their L1 or, if students are native speakers, they might benefit from the additional experience a tutor would have, given the wider academic knowledge that a support tutor may have attained through their scholastic experience. This area remains ripe for further development through comparative and quantitative research.

Hall (2009) in his work, *WAC/WID in the Next America: Redefining Professional Identity in the Age of the Multilingual Majority*, describes the future in an Anglophone context, "In the Next America, multilingual issues will not be confined to the ESL program or the ESL sections of freshman Composition or to the Writing Center; rather, they will be in every classroom in every subject on every campus, and every faculty member will be responsible for teaching MLLs" (p. 45). This study has made clear that the future Hall describes has already arrived in a non-Anglophone context. Hall's work is supported by Wong (2010) whose longitudinal study concluded that English as the sole medium of instruction was preferred by students, even outside of Anglophone contexts. This suggests a further challenge facing practitioners of writing support in this context, which may only partly be informed by professional experiences in locations where English is spoken both inside and outside the walls of the academy. This study goes further to inform writing support in a non-Anglophone context, and future research in this area will allow a more complete and customized view of the university writing support landscape to emerge.

The following recommendations stem from findings reached in the articles published for this study. They fall into two main categories; recommendations for UNYP and other such similar accredited English-medium universities that are located in non-Anglophone contexts, and recommendations for further research in the field. Additional research will not only extend the boundaries of writing support provision, but it will also justify future development of these services, considering varying cultural backgrounds of the students for whom the services exist.

For UNYP and other similar private accredited higher education institutions:

- TEFL/TESOL writing tutors are the most effective writing support staff. *ESL Writers* edited by Bruce and Rafoth (2004) and Aljoe (2014; Feb. 2015; Aug. 2015; Sep. 2015) support this approach.
- Where possible, run both one-to-one tutoring and a similar version of the ECTC to accommodate the greatest number of students, especially first year writers (Aljoe – Sep. 2015).
- Consider cultural differences, as Brauer (2004) and Justice, Dempsey and Cohen (2014) and Aljoe (2014; Feb. 2015; Sep. 2015; 2016) have found that this impacts learner behavior.
- Continue to devise alternative ways to promote student access to writing support services as Hayward (2006) suggests and Aljoe (2014; Sep. 2015; 2016) strongly recommends (appendices 3, 6 & 7).

For fellow researchers:

- Develop quantitative studies to further improve and justify the existence of writing support services in their various formats (Aljoe – Sep. 2015)
- As Mickey Harris (2000) and Aljoe (Sep. 2015) advocate (appendix 6), continue publishing and sharing our research in this still new and developing field.

REFERENCES (extended further in appendices in published papers)

- Abdulaziz University: An Inquiry to Move a Writing Center from Conception towards Conceptualization." *Studies in Literature and Language*. Vol. 9: 3. Pp.1-14.
- Aljoe, S. A. 2014. Encouraging First-year, NNES University Students to Seek Writing Support in Non-Anglophonic Contexts. Presented at Multidisciplinary Academic Conference, Prague, Czech Republic: MAC Prague Consulting Ltd. Appendix 3.
- Aljoe, S. A. Feb, 2015. Reflections on the Establishment of English-medium University-level Writing Support in Non-Anglophone Contexts. Presented at the 4th MAC, Prague, Czech Republic: MAC Prague Consulting Ltd. Appendix 1.
- Aljoe, S. A. Aug, 2015. The Role of Writing Centers at Accredited US Universities in Non-Anglophone Contexts. 2nd International Multidisciplinary Scientific Conference on Social Sciences & Arts SGEM Book 1, Vol. 2. Appendix 4.
- Aljoe, S. A. Oct, 2015. Bridging a Divide: Assessing and Informing the Development of Writing Support at English-medium Universities in Non-Anglophone Contexts Using a Pre-designed Heuristic for a Small-scale Study in Czech Republic. Presented at the 5th MAC, Prague, Czech Republic: MAC Prague Consulting Ltd. Appendix 2.
- Aljoe, S.A. Sep. 2015. Towards an Alternative to the Traditional Writing Centre Model in Non-Anglophone Contexts. Ed. Professor D.A. Kitchener. Research and Practice in Education, University of Bolton: 2, September. Appendix 6.
- Aljoe, S. A. 2016. The Gamification of Writing Support in Non-Anglophone Contexts. Accepted for publication 12.2.2016 in Edutainment: Games and ICT in Education. Appendix 7.
- Arkoudis, S. and Ly Tran. 2010. Writing Blah, Blah, Blah: Lecturer's Approaches and Challenges in Supporting International Students. *International Journal of Teaching and Learning in Higher Education* Volume 22, Number 2, pp. 169-178.
- Bandura, A. 1986. *Social Foundations of Thought and Action: A Social Cognitive Theory* Englewood Cliffs, NJ, US: Prentice-Hall.
- Becoming Accredited*. 2005. Council of Higher Education Accreditation (CHEA). Middle States Commission on Higher Education, (2009) *Becoming accredited: handbook for applicants and candidates for accreditation*.
- Bell, James. 2000. "When Hard Questions Are Being Asked: Evaluating Writing Centers." *The Writing Center Journal* Volume 21, Number 1, Fall/Winter pp. 8-28.
- Bouquet. E. 1999. Our Little Secret': A History of Writing Centers, Pre- to Post-open Admissions," *College Composition and Communication* 50, no.3:467.
- Boyd, J. and M. Mohamad. 2011. "Differentiating Maximum Values in Writing Centers" *Academic Exchange Quarterly*. Winter, Vol.15: 4.
<<http://rapidinterrlect.com/AEQweb/cho-4941.htm>.

- Brauer, Gerd. 2004. "The Role of Writing in Higher Education Abroad." *ESL Writers: A Guide for Writing Center Tutors*. Eds. Shanti Bruce and Ben Rafoth. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann. 134-135.
- Bucalos, A.B. 2014. "Including Faculty in Accreditation Preparation: Boon or Bane?" *Assessment UPdate: Progress, Trends and Practices in Higher Education*
- Carino, Petr. 1995. "Early Writing Centers: Toward a History," *The Writing Center Journal* 15, no.2:103.
- Cohen, L., L. Manion and K. Morrison. 2013. *Research Methods in Education*. Routledge, Mar. 7. Google Books.
 <<https://books.google.co.uk/books?hl=en&lr=&id=mLh0Oza3V1IC&oi=fnd&pg=PR3&dq=research+methodologies+in+education&ots=SNGSDkviln&sig=AGKjxE9->>
- Cohen T., M. Ferrell Justice and M.C. Dempsey. 2014. "Perceptions of clinical education preparedness at a large urban US university: Is there a difference between US-born and Non-US born students?" *Journal of International Students* 4 (3):236-245.
- DePalma, M-J and Jeffrey Ringer. 2012 "Adaptive Transfer, Writing across the Curriculum, and Second Language Writing: Implications for Research and Teaching."Ch.1.
- Donnelli, E. and K. Garrison. 2003. "Tapping Multiple Voices in Writing Center Assessment" *Academic Exchange Quarterly*. Vol. 7:4. Winter.
- Eaton, J.S. 2009. "Accreditation in the United States" *New Directions for Higher Education*. Pp. 79-86. DOI: 10.1002/he
- Ede L. and Andrea Lunsford. 2000. "Some Millennial Thoughts about the Future of Writing Centers." *The Writing Center Journal*, Volume 20, Number 2, Spring/Summer.
- Elmborg and Hook. 2005. *Centers for learning: writing centers and libraries in collaboration*. Chicago, IL: Association of College Research Libraries.
- Evans, L. 2002. *Reflective Practice in Educational Research*. Bloomsbury, UK.
- Fallon, B. and B. Rafoth. 2013. "Writing Center Assessment" PPT, IWCA Summer Institute 2013.
- Fredericks-Volkwein, J. 2010. "The Assessment Context: Accreditation, Accountability and Performance." *New Directions for Instructional Research*. Wiley Online Librarypp.3-12, doi: 10.1002 / ir.327
- Gibb, G. 1988. *Learning by Doing: A guide to teaching and learning methods*. Further Education Unit, Oxford Brookes University, Oxford.
- Gray, J.P. 2013. "Translating Normalcy: Tutors Navigating Spaces between Expectations and Experiences for Non-Traditional Students." *Praxis: A Writing Center Journal*. Vol. 11:1.

- Harrington, A.M. 2010. "Problematizing the Hybrid Classroom for ESL/EFL Students" *TESL-EJ*. Vol.14: 3. December.
- Harris, M. 2000. Preparing to sit at the head table: Maintaining writing center viability in the twenty-first century. *The Writing Center Journal* 20 (2) spring / summer, pp.13-21.
- Hall, Jonathan. 2009. "WAC/WID in the Next America: Redefining Professional Identity in the Age of the Multilingual Majority." *The WAC Journal* pp.33-49.
- Hall, Jonathan. 2013. "The Impact of Rising International Student Usage of Writing Centers." *The Writing Lab Newsletter*. September 1, 2013.
- Healy, D. and I. Clark 1996. "Are Writing Centers Ethical?" *WPA* Vol. 20, Number 1/2, Fall/Winter.
- Krashen, S. 2013. *Second Language Acquisition: Theory, Application and Some Conjectures*. Cambridge, CUP.
- Kwadzo, M. 2014. "International Students' Experiences of Studying and Working at a Northeastern Public University in the US. *Journal of International Students Online* Vol.4:3. Pp.279-291. <<http://jistudents.org>>.
- Law, J. and C. Murphy. 1997. "Formative Assessment and the Paradigms of Writing Center Practice." *The Clearing House* Vol.71, 2. Nov. /Dec. Academic Research Library pp. 106-108.
- Leaky, R. 1992. "Of Writing Centers, Centeredness, and Centrism" *The Writing Center Journal*. Vol. 13:1 fall.
- Leki, I. 1995. "Coping strategies of ESL students in writing tasks across the curriculum", *TESOL Quarterly*, 29/2: 235-260.
- Light Jr., D and Suzanne Heller. 1985. *Sociology*. 4th Edition. New York: Alfred A. Knopf p.516.
- McGuire, P. 2009. "Accreditation's Benefits for Individuals and Institutions." *New Directions for Higher Education*, no. 145, spring, Wiley Periodicals.
- McHarg, M. 2015. "Building Social Capital with Skills Transfer in the Writing Center at American Design University in Qatar." *Learning and Teaching in Higher Education: Gulf Perspectives*, 12 (1).
- Moberg, E. 2010. "The College Writing Center: Best Practices, Best Technologies" *The College Writing Center*.
- North, M. 1984 "The Idea of a Writing Center." *College English*. Vol. 46, No. 5 (Sep., 1984), pp. 433-446
- Nyamu-Musembi, C. 2005. "An Actor Oriented Approach to Rights in Development." *IDS Bulletin* 36.1 Developing Rights? 41-51.

- Olsen, B., 2013. "Rethinking Our Work with Multilingual Writers: The Ethics and Responsibility of Language Teaching in the Writing Center." *Praxis: A Writing Center Journal*, Vol. 10. No.2, pp. 1-6.
- Palmquist, M. 2003."A Brief History of Computer Support for Writing Centers and Writing-Across-the-Curriculum Programs." *Computers and Composition* 20:4, Dec. pp. 395-413.
- Perley and Tanguay, 2003. "Institutional Accreditation: A Call for Greater Faculty Involvement." *Academe*, March-April, 89-91.
- Race, P. 2011. Getting students engaged. *Journal of Learning and Development in Higher Education* 3: March, pp. 2-7.
- Ronesi, L. 2012. "Meeting in the Writing Center" *TESL-EJ*. Vol.1. No. 3. University of Rhode Island. <http://www.tesl-ej.org/ej03/al.html>. Accessed: 21.9.
- Thompson, I. 2006. "Writing Center Assessment: Why and a Little How" *The Writing Center Journal* Vol.26:1 pp.33-59.
- Thonus, T. 2001. Triangulation in the Writing Center: Tutor, Tutee, and Instructor Perceptions of the Tutor's Role. *The Writing Center Journal*. Vol.22:1 Fall/Winter.
- Waller, S. 2002. "A Brief History of University Writing Centers: Variety and Diversity."
- Welch, K. and Revels-Parker, S. 2012. Writing center assessment: an argument for change. *Praxis: A Writing Center Journal*. Vol 10, 1.
- Wong, R.M.H. 2010."The Effectiveness of Using English as the Sole Medium of Instruction in English Classes: Student Responses and Improved English Proficiency." *Porta Linguarium*, enero: 13
- Worthen, B.R. and J.R. Sanders, 1987. *Educational Evaluation*. New York: Longman.
- Wright, C. 2014. "Busting the Myths about ESOL Learners – Integrating Insights from Teaching and Research." NATECLA National Conference, Keynote Plenary. June 28.

Appendix 1:

Reflections on the Establishment of English-medium University-level Writing Support in Central Europe

Shaana Aljoe, MA, TESOL

Abstract

Writing support facilities have become commonplace entities at English-medium universities worldwide. This paper presents the development of a writing center at a private English-medium university in Prague, Czech Republic. The number of private English-medium universities is increasing globally, and researchers have begun to make clear distinctions between non-native, English-speaking university students studying in non-Anglophonic settings and those who study in places where English is the native language. The recognition of this distinction has led some writing instructors in non-Anglophonic locations to take the initiative in developing writing support facilities for undergraduate students, most of whom are non-native speakers of English or English for Academic Purposes (NNES and EAP) writers. Aljoe's experience of establishing writing support at one such university is recounted here. This report highlights the most useful resources and makes recommendations that may be used to initiate and administrate effective, university-level, writing support based in non-Anglophonic contexts.

Introduction

At the beginning of the fall semester in 2009, I was asked by the Provost of the University of New York in Prague, Czech Republic, (UNYP) to establish and operate a writing center to support students at the university, where I taught first-year English Composition, essentially an academic writing course. I felt both anxious and excited about the prospect of opening the first writing support facility for students of the

university. Having taught Composition for a few years at the university, it became apparent that writing support was much needed. Students and teaching staff had been requesting such a service for years and, this was probably after learning about writing centers existing in America, Canada, New Zealand, Australia and Britain.

The initialization of a specially dedicated support facility seemed a straightforward project, and creating a writing center presented a unique opportunity to offer a truly useful, much sought-after service within the university.

Having completed a TEFL certification course in England and taught various aspects of general, business and academic English to groups as well and individuals for almost a decade, I felt well qualified to create a university-level writing center. Therefore, in an effort to establish the most suitable one, I consulted the most recent guides on writing center establishment and one-to-one tutoring. What became immediately clear was that research pertaining exclusively to writing centers in an American or Anglophone context was not only plentiful, but also useful even for centers operating outside of an Anglophone country. Curiously, research pertaining to the establishment of a writing center outside of this English-speaking context was far less abundant. Writing center researchers are beginning to address this imbalance, thereby providing an invaluable reference for fledgling tutors, especially in non-Anglophonic contexts.

The idea that many support units need to operate for years as stopgap solutions until a strong justification can be given for funding, is a conclusion already reached by some writing center specialists. However, based on my experience, the body of research addressing the issues of being in the initial stages of development requires further documentation as writing center directors and tutors in the beginning stages rarely perform that role in isolation. Given that English-medium institutions have

become a global phenomenon, I wanted to explore to what extent the establishing of a center to serve a culturally diverse set of students in a non-Anglophone context could be informed by a writing center movement that is considerably more mature in the United States and other English-speaking locations. A review of these experiences can serve to inform writing support tutors working outside of an English-speaking context.

It is important to note that recently researchers have compared perceptions within academia of educational preparedness held by US-born and non-US born university students. Cohen, Justice and Dempsey (2014) have found that non-US born students “were less at ease participating in discussions... [and] had a statistically lower level of confidence in communication” (241). Their assertion that cultural backgrounds impact learning behavior means that writing support offered in non-Anglophonic contexts needs to be promoted differently to students who are unfamiliar with such facilities.

Useful resources

Tutors intending to establish writing support facilities such as a writing center should consider that much of the existing research on writing centers report academic writing and composition instructors being the primary initiators of writing support facilities such as centers or laboratories. The idea that tutors or directors of writing support units perform duties solely related to that position is one that tends to apply to well-established centers that have official budgets and have been in operation for some time. Outside of financial resources, the literature provides the most helpful basic information.

Tutors can make practical use of the most recently published research on writing center development within Anglophone-based university settings. First published in 2002, a

comprehensive guide outlining best practice in writing centers, *The Bedford Guide for Writing Tutors*, offers comprehensive advice for conducting sessions within the center. Two years later, *ESL Writers: A Guide for Writing Center Tutors* presented a collection of useful observations and studies specifically geared to and written by writing center tutors and directors. I found these two texts most useful in my training, 'on-the-job' experience and continued learning as a writing center tutor.

Greater consideration of English-medium programs in non-Anglo-phonic geographical contexts is what these two primary texts lack. However, Nancy Hayward's examination of the cultural context in which tutoring sessions are held, is particularly useful as 'international students have different beliefs about accepting and demanding help' (Hayward 15).

Gerd Brauer, who is credited with opening one of the first tertiary writing centers in a non-Anglophonic European context, points out that outside of Anglo-American higher education writing support is a fairly new concept (Brauer 134-135). His observations highlighted the necessity of promoting the benefits of writing support as an important part of introducing a university writing support service to a culturally diverse set of students who are unfamiliar with such a service. Of note is the popular perception of writing centers for international students being that of an editing shop or 'assignment renovation'. It became immediately clear to me that this misconception needed to be energetically resisted from the start and throughout the development of the center.

English-medium international universities operating in non-Anglophone contexts enroll students who are overwhelmingly non-native speakers of English where most of the native and non-native speaking faculty are engaged in what has come to be called Content-based Language Instruction (CBLI), or subject-based, English language teaching.

Although students attending the university must demonstrate a particular level of proficiency in English in order to gain acceptance to an accredited degree program, the ways that students use the language both during and after their studies will be unique for each student and largely connected to their chosen or anticipated career path.

Formatting writing support

In an effort to get a clearer understanding of the models in current use, I began by surveying the existing writing centers at English-medium universities in non-Anglophone European countries in order to view the service models of each center. The institutions included Central European University, the American University in Paris, the City University of Seattle in Slovakia, and Webster University in Austria. These universities revealed one overriding similarity when compared with each other. Although their service delivery models were different, it was clear that their respective universities highlighted the centrality and usefulness of the facility.

Upon being charged with the responsibility of directing the development of the newly established center, I used resources such as a number of colleagues in my university's academic community and information provided by the International Writing Center Association (IWCA). In anticipation of opening the writing center, a number of informal discussions were held with management, teaching staff and students of the university. I felt that by dialog and targeted discussions with these three groups, I could create an effective writing support facility. Although there was a positive general response and

agreement about the implementation of the writing center, the reasons for wanting one varied.

Management at the university saw the center's establishment and development as another student retention rate raising tactic. More support for students means fewer of them withdrawing from university studies, a clear benefit of for-profit education. Management, also concerned with issues of accreditation, found that the establishment of a writing center helped to fulfill, at least partially, aspects of the criteria for re-accreditation of the institution from the educational authorities in the US. Also, having found a way to incorporate the running of a writing center with a writing instructor's existing responsibilities, the university had found a way to realize a writing center without having to allocate additional funds to run it. The operation of the center was simply added to the responsibilities of existing authorized writing instructor.

Instructors/tutors, management and students provided the most helpful suggestions on the center's promotion and services that could be offered. I came across a range of conflicting attitudes when canvassing the ideas of other teaching staff. Although unified in their support of the addition of a writing center, instructors tended to complain about accuracy in language acquisition and expressing exasperation with 'translation plagiarism,' but the benefits of the program far outweighed these complaints. Student and staff consultations have proved critical in the implementation of a writing center at my university as were guides produced by writing center specialists.

When introduced first semester of 2009, the writing center operated one day weekly for three consecutive hours. It was located in the library so that the tutor could easily access reference material needed to guide students to better understand and complete

assignments. Student writers were served on a first-come, first-served basis and given ten minutes of consultation time, which could be extended if no one was waiting to be assisted. I developed a satisfaction survey loosely based on the university's own course and teacher evaluation forms. Targeted surveys serve two purposes; as both an efficacy measure and as another medium of promotion for the writing support center.

Considering suggestions put forward by Brauer, I took a multipronged approach to innovate the center in order to raise awareness among as many students as possible. By aggressively publicizing the services of the writing center in the orientation presentations to new students at the beginning of every semester, creating and maintaining an exclusive writing center email address, persuading and imploring first-year English Composition students to interact with the newly established center, and encouraging staff members to refer students with writing problems, the center's profile has been raised considerably.

The University of New York in Prague publishes a monthly electronic magazine comprising of essays written by its teaching staff. I have consistently posted articles highlighting the development of the center so that it remains prominent among the services offered by the university. I sought student input in developing flyers and posters advertising the services to students, which was another practical way of keeping the center's profile raised.

Defining a service delivery model

The information gathered from other US accredited universities operating in non-Anglophone contexts such as the American University in Paris proved useful in my initial practical administration of a writing center in Prague. Organizations such as the

International Writing Center Association (IWCA) and professional journals such as *The Writing Center Journal* and *The Writing Lab Newsletter* are strong indications that institutional writing support units will not become obsolete, but may be more a necessity even with the onslaught of technological ‘assistance’ that students can currently access.

With regard to the center I established in 2009, there were several student complaints about the ‘noise’ coming from consultation sessions held in what was the Writing Center Corner of the library. An assessment of the problem led to the solution of relocating the center in a separate office which was within close proximity to the library. This move has resulted in an increase in the usage of the writing center as students had expressed strong feelings about protecting the privacy of their consultations. The current location near the library ensures that reference materials are within reach, and students can easily access electronic archives in the library when necessary.

In this new location, the hours of operation have increased to accommodate the growing popularity of the service. The center is currently open daily, and the newly introduced opportunity for students to receive responses to queries via email has gained an impressive following. This additional service occurred as a result of a number of students coming to the center, but needing further timely consultation before submitting assignments.

The process of tutor consultations is becoming routine as the center develops. After a face-to-face consultation with a student in the center, the tutor is able to respond to students queries via email. Effective time management techniques such as introducing alterations, continually re-assessing and responding to and improving the functioning of

the center are initiatives which have kept the university's writing center open and gaining a strong following among students.

Conclusion

Contrary to my initial expectations, initiating a writing center was a great challenge but not insurmountable. The different approaches to writing support which need to be taken to assist students studying in English in a non-Anglophonic context are of considerable importance. Constant innovation based on multi-formatted suggestions from specialist guides, students, other instructors and administrators has proven useful in the endurance of writing centers globally. By enthusiastically advertising the existence of the center, the tutor can promote the center to students who are unfamiliar and/or may not have visited otherwise.

The data collected in the first year of the university's writing center was sufficient to glean useful insights into its performance. However, there is a constant need to review and refine student feedback methods. A general survey of all students and teaching staff at the beginning and/or end of semesters not only provides further understanding of student perceptions of the writing support offered, but the positive attitude and support of the teaching staff also serve as another form of writing center promotion.

The number of English-medium universities operating in non-English contexts has increased steadily over the past 40 years and the trend shows no sign of abating despite the recent global economic downturn. As long as there is a demand for these academic institutions, it is important that the facilities offered by these institutions provide critical linguistic support for students who need the additional support with developing their

English language expression and skills, even though they will perceive and respond differently given their cultural backgrounds.

Works Cited

Brauer, Gerd. "The Role of Writing in Higher Education Abroad." *ESL Writers: A Guide for Writing Center Tutors*. Eds. Shanti Bruce and Ben Rafoth. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann. 134-135. 2004. Print

Cohen, T., M Ferrell Justice and M.C. Dempsey (2014). "Perceptions of Clinical Preparedness at a Large Urban US University: Is there a difference between US-born and Non-US born students?" *Journal of International Students* 4 (3): 2014, 236-245

Hayward, Nancy. "Insights into Cultural Divides" *ESL Writers: A Guide for Writing Center Tutors*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann. 1-15. 2004. Print.

Appendix 2:

Bridging a Divide: Assessing and informing the development of writing support at English-medium universities in non-Anglophone contexts using a pre-designed writing center heuristic for a small-scale study in Czech Republic

Shaana A. Aljoe

University of New York in Prague (CZ) and Bolton University (UK)

Introduction

Writing support facilities are now commonplace at many English-medium institutions of higher learning in locations where English is not the locally spoken language. The expansion of writing support at the tertiary level of education is largely due to the growing number of non-traditional students, so called to describe those with international schooling backgrounds (Hess 2011; National 2013, qtd. in Gray 2013). Writing support facilities that serve international students in non-Anglophone contexts tend to be run differently owing primarily to basic socio-cultural considerations of this specific group of students. In an effort to sustain writing support facilities in highly unique contexts, regular feedback from instructors and students is essential. Feedback from stakeholders on their perceptions of the support facility also serves as a mode of assessment which will impact the overall development of writing support offered.

Using a pre-designed heuristic to conduct a small scale study in Czech Republic at a private, US accredited, English-medium university, this report attempts to answer the following research questions: Can triangulated data from instructors, students and the writing support tutor reveal significant differences in the perception of writing support by students and instructors?

Moreover, to what extent can collected data be used to both assess and inform the director of writing support units? The answers to these questions will most likely influence writing support practitioners operating in similar contexts. Writing support researcher, Lerner (2003) proposes combining perceptions of faculty and students, institutional expectations and research student needs to assess the effectiveness of writing support (65). Therefore, for the purposes of this report, Lerner's suggestion will be followed as much as possible. This is also in keeping with the suggestion made by Bell (2000), "Congruent with the appropriate types, writing centers should design and share *small-scale* evaluations" (7).

Methodology

Using heuristics developed by Welch and Revels-Parker in 2012 combined with two separate small-scale writing lab surveys of teaching staff and students, an assessment will be made of the writing support services offered at a private, US accredited English-medium University in the capital city, Prague, Czech Republic. This assessment will also help to inform the practices currently employed by writing support services at the University.

In their argument for changing the approach to assessment of writing support units, Welch and Revels-Parker (2012) provide seven key questions for designing a pilot for assessment. The questions are as follows:

- 1) “Who should be in charge of the assessment at your institution?”
 - 2) What kinds of challenges does your writing [support unit] face?
 - 3) What are your goals for the assessment?
 - 4) What is the mission of the writing [support unit]?
 - 5) What kinds of data do you already collect and how useful is it useful for measuring the outcomes you define?
 - 6) How can you partner with your own Office of Assessment and Institutional Research to establish a plan, collect needed data, and analyse results?
 - 7) How can you publish the results to help others and to be rewarded for your work?
- (Welch and Revels-Parker 2012)

While answering these questions, the results of the relevant aspects of student and instructor writing lab perception surveys will be discussed in order to achieve a measure of triangulation and to highlight significant issues. It should be noted that Welch and Revels-Parker based their analysis on work done at a university located in an Anglophone context which is bound to produce different results. One should also note that this formative report focusses primarily on perceptions of a particular writing support unit by instructors and students.

1. Who should be in charge of assessment at your institution?

As with many private institutions of learning, management takes charge of assessment due to the impact it can have on factors such as student retention rates and accreditation maintenance. Thompson (2006) reminds us that “writing center directors are already overwhelmed with duties, and any free time needs to be spent improving our services...not facing the ‘math anxiety’ brought about by collecting and analyzing data.” However, if writing support units are to justify their existence, we ought to devise a plan of self-assessment. Furthermore, additional assessment would seem to better serve the institution generally. As Welch and Revels-Parker (2012) have found, “most of the published narratives of writing center assessments agree that the relationship between the writing center and its positive effect on students is a weak cause/effect argument without proper contextualization (Bell 2000; Learner 2003; North 1994 qtd. in Welch and Revels-Parker 2012).

Welch and Revels-Parker focused their study on a writing support unit located at a public university in Virginia, which had an Office of Assessment and Institutional Research (OAIR). The university writing support facility involved in this small case study is located in a European non-Anglophone context, which is a situation that tends to be less well researched than Anglophone support units in the United States. Any decisions made about assessment within the university are done by the management only. However, in the study done by Welch and Revels-Parker (2012), their OAIR “put faculty in charge of assessments in order to use the experience and expertise of faculty with the subject area in question to create a logical, usable assessment.” In the same way, the management of the small private university in Prague, Czech Republic which is the focus of this study has made faculty, staff and students partially responsible for assessments for the same reasons. This shared responsibility of assessment provides management with a form of triangulated information upon which to make more informed decisions about the running of the university as a whole.

2. What kinds of challenges does your writing [support facility] face?

In their study, Welch and Revels-Parker (2012) found that faculty members misunderstood the purpose of writing tutors. The same was found among faculty members at the small university in Prague used for this study. However, a distinct difference in the challenges faced was their need for additional ESL training for tutors. Tutors and the majority of faculty were ESL trained instructors. Another significant departure from the Welch and Revels-Parker study was the cultural relativity that tutors in a non-Anglophone context must consider in the development of a writing support facility. Anglophonic cultures do not consider requesting help an admission of weakness. However, outside of English-speaking cultures, the act of requesting help is perceived negatively. Many English-medium universities today cater to increasingly diverse student populations the majority of whom come from outside Anglophone cultures. This is an important distinction that needs to be taken into consideration when offering writing support, especially for international students. So one of the main challenges, given this particular non-Anglophone context, is changing the negative perceptions international students may have of using the services that are on offer.

The university used in this case study found a solution to reversing students' negative perception of requesting help. This was to add a different model of writing support in addition to the conventional one-to-one tutoring session developed in the United States. A tutoring 'class' where many students in one classroom work on aspects of writing individually, while a tutor moves from one student to another, seems to attract a greater number of international students than the one-to-one writing lab. While the reasons for this are varied and not the focus of this report, it could form the focus of further research.

3. In light of the challenges, what are your goals for the assessment? In other words, who is your real audience for the assessment report?

Welch and Revels-Parker (2012) fully recognize the importance of evidencing "the quality of instruction at all levels of the university in order to maintain accreditation," but their concerns are largely financial. Their goal is to highlight the efficacy of writing support in order to increase the allocation of money to support the services of the writing center. However, the university writing support unit involved in this study does not have its own budget, as the service is seen as an outgrowth of all of the academic departments in the university. Therefore, the goals of the writing support unit closely parallel those of the management, and this can be seen in the mission statements of both the university and its writing support program. Put succinctly, by providing students with options to enhance their academic work, students will likely experience greater success in their studies and complete their degree.

The real audience is every one of the stakeholders: management, faculty including the writing support tutors, non-academic staff, students and parents. The benefits for management and faculty are clear. Non-academic staff also benefits from increased student retention rates due to the provision and regular use of writing support facilities as they remain employed. Students benefit by using the services provided by the university, which satisfies parents who are the ones most likely to pay tuition and other expenses. It is important to note that external entities

such as education accreditation authorities are also part of the audience for the assessment report.

4. What is the mission of the writing [support unit]?

According to Welch and Revels-Parker (2012) every writing support unit requires a mission statement in order to be assessed accurately because “the mission of the center determines the desired outcomes for an assessment.” They provide a list of questions to assist writing support directors in creating a statement. They quote another prominent writing center researcher, Neal Lerner, who wants writing support directors to ask, “Does the mission of the writing center at [my] institution ‘fit’ the need?” Due to the specific context of the university in this study, the writing support facilities are offered only to students because members of staff are completely non-native English speakers. The mission statement for the writing support unit at the university used for this study is as follows:

The Writing Laboratory (WRL), located on the fourth floor of UNYP’s second building at Belgicka 40, is committed to helping students attending the university to become better English writers across the academic curriculum. The WRL works with students at both undergraduate and graduate levels and at any stage in the writing process. The WRL is staffed by a trained academic writing instructor and a graduate student of the University, in order to ensure that the best advice is provided to students.

The WRL tutor will guide students to the resources available that will help them to better understand and successfully complete writing assignments. The WRL tutor will not edit assignments for students, but will discuss the best approach to take in order to better understand and complete assignments so that students feel more confident about the work they produce for courses. The WRL tutor also assists with professional documents such as CVs and cover letters for students’ professional interests.

Since English is not the language commonly spoken in the University’s geographical setting, it is believed that students will benefit enormously from having The WRL. This additional assistance provides another forum which allows students the opportunity to develop confidence in expressing themselves in spoken and written English.

Rather than highlighting a campus-wide service available not only to students but also to staff and faculty, the university in this case study focusses only on students due to its geographical context. The statement is specific in terms of what its services to students include. It also seems to fit well within the university’s own mission statement.

5. What kinds of data do you already collect, and how is it useful for measuring the outcomes you define?

A general course and university satisfaction survey completed by students and faculty was how the university’s writing support unit first began. The university in this study was not established with writing support included. The support units established at this university were requested by faculty members and students through comments in satisfaction surveys. Management perceived the need for support through the eyes of the students and faculty and then filled the need. Through similar surveying of faculty and students another format of writing support was

offered to students in the form of one-to-many as well as the traditional one-to-one format. The combination of formative evaluation to improve the service and summative evaluation to determine the effectiveness of the support has led to the university currently having two modes of writing support facility. Data gathered by the writing support director, students and faculty in the form of surveys were combined to satisfy a perceived need.

Extra care needs to be taken when working in a non-Anglophone contexts due to the cultural considerations mentioned earlier. We may not collect wide-ranging data on visitors, repeat visitors and classes as Welch and Revels-Parker did at their university due to the students' perception of requesting help as a sign of weakness. So, to compensate for this lack of data information is collected through writing support surveys, course evaluation forms, instructor and staff surveys. Also, the pass rates in writing specific courses such as English Composition as well as student retention rates are taken into account by management.

6. How can you partner with your own Office of Assessment and Institutional Research to establish a plan, collect needed data, and analyse results?

The writing support assessment in the Welch and Revels-Parker study is done by the Office of Assessment and Institutional Research; however, at the university in this small-scale study the management largely performs this role. The question remains: how can writing-support directors work with management to plan, collect data and analyse results? Welch and Revels-Parker argue that an "assessment plan needed to include four major sections: Goals, Outcomes, Measurements and Targets. These sections define what is being collected and how the data will demonstrate the center's effectiveness" (4). The management at the university of this study assures this writer that the plan addresses all four sections, but encourages the writing support tutor to continue to evaluate the unit through regular surveying of students and faculty.

7. How can you publish the results to help others and to be rewarded for your work?

The writing support director at the university studied for this report publishes articles focusing on her experiences as a tutor and director of the service. Although the articles are not always published in peer-reviewed journals, they seem to be helpful reminders and updates for students, faculty and management. Some of these articles have already been cited by researchers in other geographic locations where English is not the locally spoken language. Many articles are written by the faculty and published in the university's own non-peer-reviewed electronic journal which is sent out to staff, students and other interested parties on a monthly basis.

Due to the cultural considerations mentioned earlier, great care must be taken when collecting data from students who are already reluctant to engage with support services. Therefore, writing support units in non-Anglophone contexts should ensure that data collection regarding writing support is done for all students not just the ones who visit the writing support facilities. This writer has found that Composition classes are ideal for surveying students as are university-wide student satisfaction surveys. The reward for this writing support founder and tutor is seeing the service expand the way it has over the years. Having started with one tutor, there are now three at the university where this study was done. And, having started as a desk in a corner

of the library and graduating to an office and a classroom, the service justifies its existence and has expanded.

Conclusion

Using the heuristics developed by Welch and Revels-Parker in the assessment of a writing support unit based outside of an English-speaking context has revealed some important issues for writing support program organizers in similar positions. This writer agrees with Welch and Revels-Parker (2012), "The writing [support unit] assessment is a valuable part of the institutional assessment for accreditation and should receive all of the resources it needs to continue serving students" (5). It is clear after completing this analysis that management has been assessing the writing support unit and expanding it as necessary over the years, increasing its effectiveness at the same time. Experiences of similar writing support units are necessary to build a more complete picture of what happens in certain non-Anglophone contexts. It is hoped that this report will prove useful to others engaged in writing support at English-medium universities located in non-Anglophone contexts.

References

- Bell, J.H. (2000). When hard questions are asked: evaluating writing centers. *The Writing Center Journal*. Vol 21. 1.
- Gray, J.P. (2013). Translating normalcy: tutors navigating spaces between expectations and experiences for non-traditional students. *Praxis: A Writing Center Journal*. Vol 11, 1
- Lerner, N. (2003). Writing center assessment: searching for the proof in our effectiveness. *The Center Will Hold: Critical Perspectives on Writing Center Scholarship*. Ed. Michael A. Pemberton and Joyce Kinkead. Logan, UT: Utah State Univ. Press, pp 58-73.
- Thompson, I. (2006). Writing center assessment: why and a little how. *The Writing Center Journal*. Vol 26, 1
- Welch, K and S. Revels-Parker (2012) Writing center assessment: an argument for change. *Praxis: A Writing Center Journal*. Vol 10, 1

Appendix 3

Encouraging First-year, NNES University Students to Seek Writing Support in Non-Anglophonic Contexts

Shaana Aljoe

Abstract

This short report focuses on answering three questions regarding mainly non-native English speaking students attending English-medium universities in non-Anglophonic contexts. This unique group of students requires specialized attention if they are to begin reaping the rewards of academic success from the first year of their studies. The cultural diversity of the group means that lecturers, especially writing tutors, will have to advertise the services of writing support facilities such as a writing center more vigorously from the first year of study. This report takes a brief look at one English-medium university in a non-Anglophonic location and suggests ways to get students to request help of their own volition.

Academic writing for first year university students attending English-medium institutions can be challenging for both native and non-native English speaking students. Both categories of students attending universities in Anglophonic contexts have the additional advantage of living within the culture of English language, whether it is in Canada, Australia, New Zealand, UK or the US. Outside of an Anglophonic context, English-medium universities operate in a similar manner to their Anglophonic –based counterparts where many of the courses and degree programs are comparable. Student services offered by universities are also much the same. One such service is the writing center or writing lab, which many institutions provide so that students receive additional assistance with aspects of academic writing.

Writing Centers operating in non-Anglophonic locations will likely serve a more diverse student body. In this context, the majority of students are likely non-native English speakers (NNES), whereas in an Anglophonic context, native English speakers (NES) are more likely to be in the majority. This difference in context is significant in that NNES students will be less familiar with and subsequently less comfortable with seeking help with written assignments than their counterparts in Anglophonic locality.

This report answers three research questions stemming from this issue of encouraging NNES university students to seek help with academic writing assignments in non-Anglophonic contexts. The research questions are as follows:

1. What are the reasons preventing students from asking for help with their written assignments?
2. How can first-year NNES students be encouraged to seek writing help autonomously?
3. What role can writing center tutors play in guiding students to seek the help they need?

Using combined data collected from administrators and NNES students attending an English-medium university in a non-Anglophonic country including questionnaires, interviews and surveys alongside the extant research on the topic will provide some suggestions on how to overcome the specific issues first-year NNES students may have. By examining the reasons

preventing students from asking for writing help, educators can encourage students to seek help autonomously. The role that writing tutors play in guiding students to seek help is significant due to the perspectives of international EFL students. This study will aid university academic writing tutors by reviewing approaches that help first-year students in non-Anglophonic countries enjoy a more success in academic writing from their first-year of university study.

From the Literature

Writing center researchers commonly locate the origin of writing centers in Anglophonic contexts. Stephen North's 1984 seminal work, "The Idea of a Writing Center," often referenced by researchers in the field, writes about writing centers at universities in a North American context. In fact, much research on writing support for EFL university students focusses on cases in Anglophonic contexts. For example, Arkoudis and Tran (2010) work with students attending Australian universities. Race (2011) tackles student engagement in higher education at British universities, while Harris (2000), Yuan (2011), Olson (2013) and Hall (2013) focus on writing centers in an American setting.

Although the focus of these researchers is on writing centers in Anglophonic contexts, many of their findings can be successfully applied to non-Anglophonic contexts. Arkoudis and Tran (2010) explore the role of lecturers in students' academic language development. They argue that by "internationalizing the curriculum," emphasizing the learning and teaching of academic writing, "incorporating the development of academic writing with collaboration from Language and Support staff" – such as the writing center tutor – and by "raising student awareness and willingness to seek out support from the Language and Support [staff]", institutions can take a more comprehensive approach. All of these recommendations are workable within and without an Anglophonic context. Race (2011) also focuses on the role of the lecturer in motivating students by listing "seven factors that underpin student learning." These aspects are applicable to lecturers of NNES and NES university students in any context.

The reasons first-year NNES students do not ask for help are plentiful. If we regard a student's efforts to seek academic writing help as evidence of their desire to progress and achieve then we can learn much from Sharon Xuereb's (2014) empirical study that examines why students terminate their studies and what convinces them to remain in university through to graduation. She quotes Foster et al. (2011) to explain that levels of student doubt about successfully completing a degree course rose and fell according to a combination of factors such as high academic workload, anxiety and lack of support to name just a few. It is this type of doubting which plagues many NNES students during their first year of studying for an undergraduate degree. These doubts represent reasons why some students are reluctant to ask for help with writing.

An additional issue with NNES students in non-Anglophonic contexts is their widely held belief that having achieved a minimum score on an officially recognized English Language test as an admission requirement is proof that their level of knowledge is more than adequate to achieve success at university level. However, the failure rate for first semester English Composition

courses is consistently more than 40% at one English-medium university located in a non-Anglophonic context. It is this imbalance that writing centers in non-Anglophonic contexts need to address. Getting first-year NNES students to engage autonomously with the support facilities provided to them by universities is one way of reducing the failure rate and building interest in writing academically.

Recently researchers have compared perceptions within academia of educational preparedness held by US-born and non-US born university students. Cohen, Justice and Dempsey (2014) have found that non-US born students “were less at ease participating in discussions... [and] had a statistically lower level of confidence in communication” (241). Their assertion that cultural backgrounds impact learning behavior means that writing support offered in non-Anglophonic contexts needs to be promoted differently to students who are unfamiliar with such facilities.

First-year students attending English medium universities in non-English-speaking localities can be encouraged to seek help with their writing assignments by their instructors and writing tutors. Most important in attracting students to writing support is the staff that students will meet when they arrive for a conference. Encouragement and enthusiasm expressed by a tutor feeds directly into student motivation. Race (2011) highlights the importance of helping students to “desire success.” When instructors and writing tutors make clear to students from the beginning of and throughout the school year that the ability to produce acceptable academic writing requires much practice, and that NES students have great difficulty in this area, NNES students may gain the confidence to rise to challenges they may encounter in academic writing classes such as English Composition. It is important that instructors and students fuel this desire to learn throughout the semester. Continual questioning on subject knowledge is one way to achieve this. However, Race (2011) logically points out that checking student motivational factors only at the end of a module or semester is simply too late.

Educational therapist Richard Newman (2010) divides help seeking students into two distinct categories ‘adaptive’ and ‘excessive’. He defines adaptive help-seekers as those students who know when and how to ask questions about an assignment as a part of the learning process, whereas excessive help seekers do not. Newman insists, “Providing children with assistance only when needed helps them distinguish between adaptive and excessive seeking” (9). Therefore, an instructor’s job is to develop adaptive help seeking strategies for the benefit of all students.

Newman (2010) also raises the point that “older students are especially afraid to ‘look dumb’ in class” (8). This means it is especially important that lecturers avoid negative responses every time a student asks a question. At the same time, according to Race (2011), “we need to help students to value the experience of getting things wrong then finding out why, and working towards getting them right” (5). Both Newman and Race consider constructive feedback of critical importance when encouraging students during their studies.

When writing center researcher Gerd Brauer (2002) attempted to introduce the US model of a writing center at a German university in 1994, he encountered much resistance because this type of facility seemed foreign in a European context. Still today, NNES students who are

unfamiliar with the prospect of receiving extra-curricular assistance with assignments will find the provision of writing support strange. This means that writing tutors need to advertise their services more forcefully in a non-Anglophonic context.

A small-scale study of first- year students mainly NNES students at an accredited English-medium university in Central Europe

Table 1 provides a national profile of all enrolled students in fall 2009. It was from this group that a small number of respondents, all enrolled in the first-semester English Composition course, completed satisfaction surveys after visiting the center for assistance with an assignment. At this particular university, all degree-seeking students are required to pass two semesters of English Composition. Exemption is possible for one semester or both semester through transferred credit systems or Advanced Placement tests. Considering that most of the students entering the institution are non-native speakers of English (NNES), it is likely that most of the students will be required to take both semesters of Composition.

Table 1: National profile of all newly enrolled students in fall 2009

UG Intake Nationalities breakdown	Fall '09
Czech	35
Slovak	13
Russian	27
Ukraine	3
Kazakhstan	18
Azerbaijan	4
France	24
US	6
Cyprus	2
Other*	25
Total	157

(Troneckova, 2011)

*Other nationalities include Albania, Bosnia Herzegovina, Germany, Macedonia, Georgia, Greece, Iraq, Pakistan, Italy, Spain, Norway, Sweden, Holland, Portugal, Armenia, Bulgaria, Belarus, Croatia, Estonia, Finland, Kosovo, Moldova, Serbia, Slovenia, Turkey, Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan, Mongolia, China, Korea, Vietnam, Japan, Nigeria, South Africa, Israel, Mexico, Brazil, Columbia, Canada, U.K., and New Zealand.

Of the 157 students shown above, approximately one third answered a brief survey regarding their visits (or not) to the writing center facility located on the grounds of the university. More than 90% of students believed that at least one visit to the writing center should be required of all students. The majority of those students also claimed that the writing center was a valuable facility within the university. However, when I queried how many students had actually visited the lab for assistance the number dropped significantly to half. This evidences a sentiment

expressed by Gerd Brauer (2013) in *First Person* where he quotes a student who states, “We students do ... need help with kicking ourselves into intellectual action.” The disconnect between how students feel about writing support and the actions they take to resolve their problems in writing needs to be addressed by writing tutors and instructors using the approaches put forward by Race(2011) and others.

To conclude, both NES and NNES students have the same objective in mind when embarking on a university degree course. The most common reason for students continuing university until completion was the desire to reach the end goal of graduation, which would improve job prospects (Xuereb 152). This report has sought to answer three research questions focusing on the theme of getting first-year students to seek assistance individually. I have reviewed the most pertinent literature to highlight what constitutes best practice in non-Anglophonic contexts. In the first year of university, students need strong encouragement to engage with educators within the academy. By developing the confidence and skills to become adaptive help seekers at the start of their studies, especially with writing assignments, the more likely it is that they will succeed.

References

Arkoudis, S. and Ly Tran. Writing blah, blah, blah: Lecturers’ approaches and challenges in supporting international students. *International Journal of Teaching and Learning in Higher Education* 22 (2): 2010, 169-178

Brauer, Gerd (2002). Drawing connections across education: The Freiburg writing center model. *Language & Learning across the Disciplines* 5 (3): February 2002, 61-77.

Brauer, Gerd (2013). Let’s not forget learning in the teaching process. *First Person*. Emory University. Accessed 20/8/2013.

Cohen, T., M Ferrell Justice and M. C. Dempsey (2014). Perceptions of clinical education preparedness at a large urban US university: Is there a difference between US-born and Non-US born students? *Journal of International Students* 4 (3): 2014, 236-245.

Hall, John. The impact of rising international student usage of writing centers. *The Writing Lab Newsletter* Sept. /Oct. 2013. 5-9.

Harris, Muriel (2000). Preparing to sit at the head table: Maintaining writing center viability in the twenty-first century. *The Writing Center Journal* 20 (2) spring / summer 2000, 13-21.

Newman, Richard (2010). Encouraging students to seek academic help: The role of the educational therapist. *The Educational Therapist* 31 (2): Summer 2010, 8-10.

North, Stephen M. (1984). The idea of a writing center. *College English* 46 (5): Sep. 1984, 433-446.

Olsen, Bobbi (2013). Rethinking our work with multilingual writers: The ethics and responsibility of language teaching in the writing center. *Praxis: A Writing Center Journal* 10 (2): 2013, 1-5.

Race, Phil (2011). Getting students engaged. *Journal of Learning and Development in Higher Education* 3: March 2011, 2-7.

Troneckova, V., vtroneckova@unyp.cz, 2011. MSMT, etc...: Stats template. [Email] Message to S. Aljoe (saljoe@unyp.cz). Sent/rec'd Monday 12, Sep. 2011, 13:09.

Xuereb, S. (2014). Why students consider terminating their studies and what convinces them to stay. *Active Learning in Higher Education* 15 (2): April 2014, 145-154.

Yuan, W. (2011). Academic and cultural experiences of Chinese students at an American university: A qualitative study. *Intercultural communication studies* XX (1): 2011, 141-155.

Appendix 4:

The Role of Writing Centers at Accredited U.S. Universities in Non-Anglophone Contexts**Abstract**

The link between American accredited universities in non-English speaking contexts and the creation of traditionally staffed writing centers is examined with emphasis on enhancing student engagement. Although writing centers have become as fairly common a department as any other at many universities in the US, there is a deficit in writing center provision at universities outside of the Anglophone context. Research suggests that students are unaware of their need for writing assistance at universities even when writing in their second or third language, so the need to establish writing support centers could be a significant factor explaining this. Many students attending English-medium universities in non-English speaking contexts are unfamiliar with the concept of accreditation and the existence of 'degree mills' which can make it difficult to discern and expensive for the unwitting prospective student. The presence of a university writing center could be a persuasive indicator of a reputable university because it evidences an institution's cogent commitment to improving student outcomes.

Keywords: University writing center/lab, EFL, ESL, composition, libraries, higher education accreditation, 'degree mills'.

Introduction

Although writing center research has proliferated at university campuses across the United States and in other Anglophone countries, it seems less investigation has been done into their provision at English-medium universities operating in non-Anglophone locations, and how a writing centre may support an institution's accreditation status. Many private American tertiary institutions overseas that have close associations with accredited institutions in the United States may lack a student-centered academic forum that is commonly available at accredited universities in the US, such as access to a professionally staffed writing center. This imbalance warrants further investigation because such a provision would seem to favorably impact student-learning outcomes, as at universities in the US, and could positively contribute to an institution's accreditation status. This aspect of higher education is significant within the broader global community because accreditation-granting agencies govern the standards maintained within academic institutions.

There is ample research on the topic of university tutorial writing support focusing mainly on praxis and theory with much of it grounded in an English-speaking or Anglophone context Grimm (1999); Boquet (2002); Murphy and Sherwood (2003); Geller *et al* (2006); and Ryan and Zimmerelli (2006). There is, however, much less information and research on the necessity and efficacy of their existence in a non-Anglophone context. This oversight may have resulted from the urgency to meet the demand for providing academic writing support for native speakers of English attending Anglophone universities since the 1970s (Waller, 2002). Research on this type of university level writing support originates in Anglophone located, English-medium, accredited institutions. The demographic makeup of the student body at today's English-medium

international university combined with commitments made with the American accredited sponsor university may compel administrators to consider providing writing centre support.

Writing center research carried out at English-medium universities in non-Anglophone contexts include studies conducted in South Africa by Liebowitz and Goodman (1997) and in Denmark and Germany by Gerd Bauer (2004). These studies underscore the important contribution to knowledge that researching writing support at English-medium universities can make. Being that English-medium or 'international' universities in non-English geographical contexts are growing in number and popularity in non-Anglophone settings (Heyneman, 1997), it would seem necessary to assess the benefits of writing centre provision to students who may be less familiar with academic writing support on a tertiary level. Moreover, the addition of a writing center facility may benefit a university's performance evaluation when its accreditation status is being sought or renewed.

American accredited universities, including those located in non-Anglophone locations, will, beyond the primary concern of providing academic instruction, have to evidence best practice in clearly measurable terms when seeking to acquire or renew their respective accreditations. This will require that facilities provide records and documentation generated by continuous administrator, instructor and student feedback on programs and facilities available at all participating institutions, which can be assessed with the aim of measuring educational effectiveness. Considering the highly complex and multifaceted nature of the accreditation process, it seems that a facility such as a writing center is relatively insignificant, however, the opposite is true if viewed through the lens of a recognized accreditation agency's policy and standards guide. By improving institutional effectiveness and, consequently student outcomes,

providing this type of writing support seems to play a limited but vital role in successfully meeting accreditation standards at foreign-based English-medium universities.

This study focuses on students attending an accredited English-medium university located in non-Anglophone context, specifically within central Europe, and attempts to assess the benefits of providing traditional writing centers at universities in this particular setting. An analysis of the diverse student population of a small, private, English-medium, accredited university in Prague, Czech Republic illustrates that having access to additional language input may be essential when English is not the locally spoken language.

A brief explanation of the system and value of higher education accreditation in the United States is followed by an illustration of the specific relation between improving efficiency as an objective of accreditation and the creation of writing centers, and how this fulfills standards recently reaffirmed by American accreditation recognition authorities. Evidence of students' erroneous perceptions of their own writing ability will provide the compelling evidence necessary for managers and faculty in institutions without such facilities to prioritize the establishment of traditional writing centers as an academic imperative. By revealing the important link between the establishment of writing centers in non-English contexts and fulfilling criteria for institutional improvement as stated in the policy guides in the US system of university accreditation, this research will further encourage English-medium universities to provide and maintain additional writing support in non-Anglophone contexts.

The role of writing centers

Writing centers and academic writing support facilities have become as commonplace as any other purely 'academic' department at many universities. Indeed, a writing center *movement*, led by academics such as Ben Rafoth and Christina Murphy, is gaining momentum within

universities in English-speaking contexts and is evidenced by the increasing amount of published professional experience of and scholarly research on the phenomena not only in professional periodicals such as *The Writing Center Journal* and *The Writing Lab Newsletter*, but also in scholarly texts; *The Bedford Guide for Writing Tutors* by Ryan and Zimmerelli first published in 2002, and Bruce and Rafoth's *ESL Writers: A Guide for Writing Center Tutors* in 2004. While the majority of the experiences and research catalogued in these anthologies focus on issues of university writing support for English as foreign language (EFL) speakers, virtually all exclusively document the experience at English-medium universities and colleges within English speaking or Anglophone contexts.

Researchers have recently begun to explain the deficit in writing center provision at universities operating in non-Anglophone contexts. Matsuda et al. (2011) confirm that composition scholarship overall has been rather slow to reflect the influx of second-language writers in [English] composition classrooms. This writer, having worked extensively with students attending English-medium universities in non-Anglophone contexts, asserts the rationale for the lack of provision of writing centers in these locations could be that these students have become proficient in reading and writing in what is not their native language, so the level of English language knowledge in writing is regarded as secondary to the specialized content-knowledge of the specific tertiary degree area pursued. As students have to prove a level of knowledge in the English language via an internationally recognized English language examination, such as the TOEFL or IELTS, in order to gain admission to an English-medium university, it is presumed they have adequate knowledge to pursue a degree in the language without additional accuracy. The connection between writing centre research and composition studies research is historical as both fields inform each other.

Waller (2002) chronicles the history of the development of university writing centers. Listing a series of social and political events leading to the creation of writing centers at US universities, she cites the end of American military engagement in Vietnam, which led to thousands of demobilized servicemen and women needing to acquire skills to rejoin the civilian work force, as a major catalyst in the creation of university writing support facilities. Waller also tracks policy changes that lead up to the current situation that had writing centers at nearly all US universities and college campuses by the mid-1990, the phenomenon of writing centers at US universities seeming to coincide with a more liberalized entrance policy adopted across the United States within higher education in the 1970s (Waller, 2002). This trend in the initiation and development of writing centers has continued to spread to English-medium universities globally, and is evidenced by the emergence of high-profile academic groups such as the European Association for Writing Center Tutors. A survey of virtually all foreign-based, English-medium university web pages will now include a separate section or page which describes a facility for writing support in the form of a writing center or writing lab.

Researchers agree that writing centers are becoming increasingly integral parts of universities, some proclaiming (Elborg and Hook, 2005; Cooke and Bledsoe, 2008) writing centers to be at the very heart of the institution, connecting all of the disciplines together in such a way that has yet to be fully exploited. Close successful collaboration with other university departments such as the library has been well documented (Elborg and Hook, 2005; Cooke and Bledsoe, 2008). This research highlights the importance of the work and achievements of writing centers at US universities and emphasize that the relationship between libraries and writing centers continues to enjoy development in almost every aspect. Where English-medium universities exist in a multilingual or foreign setting, the provision of both a writing center and staff of consultants is invaluable in assisting students in their own development of facets of academic language styles,

as has been demonstrated in a study conducted at the University of the Western Cape, South Africa.

Working in South Africa, Leibowitz and Goodman (1997) were able to highlight the importance of the role of “university writing centers in increasing access to academic discourse in multilingual contexts.” They found that in a multilingual context existing outside of the Anglo-American learning environments, students are not aware of their own writing deficiencies, “as many as 44% of first year students who visited the Writing Center in their first year maintained that they had no problems with their essays, whereas the consultants [writing center tutors] documented only 6% of first year students as ‘having no problems.’” [Further,] “Since most students need to be shown the value of the writing process and of putting more effort into their writing, visits to the Writing Center should be made compulsory or a feature built into a course curriculum” (1997). Gordon (2008), who advocates requiring first year university students to visit the writing center or writing support facility, reveals the discrepancy between what students think is appropriate and what is actually acceptable academic writing as a reason to require first-year writing students to visit the writing center. Gordon’s work strongly supports not only the establishment of writing centers, but also advocates student visits as compulsory.

The documented fieldwork on writing center development in non-Anglophone contexts is steadily increasing. Gerd Brauer’s (2004) experience of tutoring in the US and abroad in the 1990s can help to inform writing center directors and staff of the structure and policies developed at overseas writing centers in non-Anglophone contexts. Brauer traces the beginnings of initial writing support at English-medium universities to “the early 1990s at The Academic Writing Center at the University of Copenhagen, Denmark, founded in 1992 and the Writing Lab at the University of Bielefeld, Germany, two years later” (p.135). These two centers

are evidence of the popularity of tertiary study in English undertaken by both native and ESL students, and “the growing international reputation of US writing pedagogy” (ibid).

Further to providing analyses of his experience of writing centers outside of the Anglophonic university context, Brauer examines issues encountered by these writing centers and offers suggestions for raising the profile of writing centers at universities in non-English contexts. He found that interest in providing writing support at tertiary learning institutions globally has begun to increase due to programs being developed to be more compatible with the Anglo-American system of higher education. He believes there is a need for writing centers in non-Anglophone contexts to present themselves in such a way that they may be more utilized by students who are not familiar with the idea of writing support not merely existing as remedial help for students, but as an academic forum as scholarly as any other within a university. Most importantly, he suggests that students and faculty at English-medium international universities may not be as familiar with writing support of this kind as students and faculty operating in Anglo-American contexts. Brauer’s contribution further clarifies the role of university writing centers abroad, and illustrates the necessity for increased support and promotion of writing centers in non-Anglophone contexts. It is partially through Brauer’s work that a connection to university accreditation can be made.

Significance of accreditation

The raised profile of university accreditation appears to be the result of at least two phenomena. First, the increased globalization of higher education and, second, an alarming rise in the number of ‘degree/accreditation mills,’ which are disreputable institutions offering degrees that can be acquired with little study, in far less time than it would normally take, and at a cost which undercuts accredited institutions. According to the Council for Higher Education

Accreditation (CHEA), the US entity established to recognize academic standards at American universities and colleges, the “primary reason to be concerned about degree mills is that they demean the value of learning and the importance of educational standards by treating degrees only as a commodity to be bought and sold, [they] defraud individuals who are misled by the promises of the purported school that the degree will have some value, bogus degrees present a danger to the public, [and, more importantly,] degree mills are unfair to the millions of individuals who have worked hard to earn legitimate degrees” (Council for Higher Education Accreditation, 1995).

However, the low cost of a degree from a degree mill will eventually prove a far greater expense should the ‘graduate’ wish to gain employment within his/her chosen degree area or continue their studies. Students graduating from ‘degree mills’ are not considered university graduates by US standards because their degrees are not recognized as reflecting the quality of standard as that of an accredited university. Reports of controversy concerning accreditation have raised global awareness within and outside of higher education.

Students are attending English medium institutions in a variety of non-Anglophone locations around the world. Those who complete programs at these institutions are expected to have attained a level of English language fluency that is commensurate with the degree earned by the time of graduation. One way universities can support this expectation is to provide an extracurricular forum where students can get the regular practice needed in the target language which takes time. Much of the research (CHEA, 1995; Perley & Tanguay, 2008; Bardo, 2009; Eaton, 2009; Kelderman, 2009; McGuire, 2009; Volkwein, 2009; Procopio, 2010) into university accreditation and the policy statements from accrediting bodies show that improving facilities for students to enhance their learning is an obligation of all accredited universities regardless of

their geographical location. In order for a university to become accredited it must be seen as actively and rigorously following a set of accreditation guidelines that include the provision of student services that facilitate learning. The services provided should reflect the needs of learners within every respective location. *See figure 1.*

Figure 1: Sample of total undergraduate (UG) enrolment statistics for fall and spring semesters 2006 to 2011 at an accredited English-medium university located in a non-Anglophone location (central Europe).

UG Intake Nationalities breakdown	Fall 06	Spr. 07	Fall 07	Spr. 08	Fall 08	Spr. 09	Fall 09	Spr.
Czech	62	9	52	5	52	7	35	3
Slovak	17	2	12	1	19	1	13	1
Russian	14	0	14	2	21	2	27	3
Ukraine	4	0	0	2	4	1	3	3
Kazakhstan	10	6	9	2	12	3	18	4
Azerbaijan	0	0	3	1	3	0	4	1
France	0	0	6	0	20	0	24	0
US	5	1	4	2	5	3	6	0
Cyprus	1	1	2	0	2	0	2	0
Other*	49	9	37	11	38	10	25	7
Total	162	28	139	26	176	27	157	22

(Troneckova, 2011)

*Other nationalities include: Albania, Bosnia Herzegovina, Germany, Macedonia, Georgia, Greece, Iraq, Pakistan, Italy, Spain, Norway, Sweden, Holland, Portugal, Armenia, Bulgaria, Belarus, Croatia, Estonia, Finland, Kosovo, Moldova, Serbia, Slovenia, Turkey, Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan, Mongolia, China, Korea, Vietnam, Japan, Nigeria, South Africa, Israel, Mexico, Brazil, Columbia, Canada, U.K., and New Zealand.

In 2009 J. S. Eaton, the current president of the Council for Higher Education Accreditation (CHEA), published an updated synopsis of the process of accreditation for American universities. Eaton defines accreditation as “the process of external quality review created and used by higher education to scrutinize colleges, universities and programs for quality assurance and quality improvement” (p.79). Eaton’s description of accreditation as a ‘process’ illustrates that it is not a singular application; accreditation is an officially recognized status that must be maintained through continuous institutional improvement and must be continuously biennially.

Many university websites often include updated details of their accreditation status.

Unrecognized higher education accreditation organizations exist and can be exposed, often by contacting the Federal Trade Commission in the US, which serves to protect America’s consumers. For students attending American universities on foreign soil, institutions of disrepute may not be so readily recognizable. However, when prospective students find that there is a functioning, ethical and dynamic writing support center at a university, this should suggest that academic standards at the particular institution are high. A professionally staffed writing center, instituted to help students on a regular and *ad hoc* basis, will most likely not exist at an unaccredited university. This can also be evidenced at unaccredited university and college websites on the Internet.

There appears a direct correlation between the recently raised profile of university accreditation and new legislation in the US that came into effect in July 2010. Higher education administrators highlight an impetus for the rising profile of American university accreditation. John Bardo, an American university chancellor and education researcher asserts, “Presidents and chancellors can expect to have their institutions under nearly continuous scrutiny by regional accrediting bodies...the number of reports, the expected details of outcomes measures, and the level of ongoing interaction between the institution and the regional association will continue to increase” (Bardo, 2009, p.47). Patricia McGuire echoes Bardo’s observation in her analysis of the renewed *Higher Education Opportunity Act of 2008*, which “opens the door for increased scrutiny of accreditation processes and possible public exposure of accreditation reports” (McGuire, 2009, p.32). This reflects the changing priorities of stakeholders within higher education. Accreditation is provided by regional entities, which are in turn recognized primarily by two ‘recognition’ organizations in the US: The Department of Education (DOE) – a government agency, and the Council for Higher Education Accreditation (CHEA) – a private agency. One or both of these bodies at home and abroad can sanction American universities which meet recognized standards.

“The process of recognition is similar to accreditation in a number of ways. First, CHEA and DOE each develop standards that must be met by an accrediting organization in order to be recognized. Next, the accrediting organization seeking recognition undertakes self-evaluation based on recognition standards, a process that is similar to the self-study prepared by an institution or program seeking accreditation. In addition, CHEA and DOE may require a staff site visit to the accreditor and staff reports on the visit. Based on the results of the self-evaluation and site visit CHEA and DOE award (or do not award) recognition status. Finally an accrediting organization undergoes periodic

review to maintain recognition, just as institutions and programs undergo periodic review to maintain accreditation” (Eaton, 2009, p.83).

The differences between these two entities are elemental, but the similarities are where a connection to establishing writing centers at universities becomes more readily apparent. According to Eaton, the main difference between these two recognition bodies is “CHEA recognition confers academic legitimacy on accrediting organizations, helping to solidify the place of these organizations and their institutions and programs in the national higher education community. DOE recognition is required for accreditors whose institutions or programs seek eligibility for federal student aid funds” (ibid). A commonality in the standards by which accrediting organizations are considered for recognition is the provision to ensure that institutions continuously strive to advance academic quality and student achievement by encouraging and offering services to students as a means of improving institutional effectiveness. This can be achieved in part by establishing a writing support center for students especially at accredited universities operating outside of and Anglophone context.

Perley and Tanguay (2008) explain that the two major objectives of institutional accreditation are firstly, to present a formal system of accountability of institutions and, secondly, to establish a permanent procedure for institutional improvement through a wider process of peer reviews. Perley and Tanguay advocate greater faculty involvement in the accreditation process of institutions to ensure that the focus of any improvements is directly connected to student learning outcomes (2008). An examination of an accrediting agency’s policy guidelines will show that writing center development could be seen as an obligation of English-medium tertiary institutions especially in non-Anglophone contexts.

The Middle States Commission on Higher Education is one of the six regional accreditation entities recognized by both CHEA and the US Department of Education. Its guidelines, setting out good practice for both accredited and candidate institutions compel institutions to improve the provision of education to students and provide instructional support resources including a library. As libraries modernize to facilitate advances in technology, so should writing centers, being extensions of the library service, develop to accommodate changes in the linguistic advancement of non-native English-speaking students studying at English-medium universities in non-Anglophone locations worldwide. “Accreditation will continue to be a major catalyst for college and university planning in the foreseeable future” (Procopio, 2010). Volkwein adds that institutions are eager to meet the standards set by those professional organizations because accredited programs attract the best students [and there is] evidence that indicates that outcomes such as student growth and satisfaction are most heavily influenced by campus experiences that produce student academic and social integration, which in turn produce favorable student outcomes (Volkwein, 2010, pp.6-8).

In terms of measuring institutional effectiveness, Volkwein identifies three competing philosophies each emphasizing a specific approach to assessment of efficiency. These included the resource/reputation model that focuses on rather superficial aspects of an institution, the client-centered approach that concentrates on increasing the satisfaction of students by offering the greatest number of student services possible, and the strategic or cost-benefit investment approach where “new initiatives are evaluated in light of its perceived payoff” (p.10). Justification for the introduction of a writing support facility within English-medium universities outside of English-speaking contexts seems to sit well within all of these philosophical approaches.

Findings

Waller identified an increasing need in the States for speakers and broadening of college and university ESL departments to satisfy the growing need from new immigrant groups, returning veterans and non-traditional enrollments such as athletes, mature students, and the academically challenged in the US. In other words, due to the development and expansion of what Waller (2002) refers to as an “open admissions” policy that would allow previously barred applicants to attain a liberalized education at many schools. Offering everyone a chance of betterment can be seen as a reflection of government endorsed American values.

It is important to note that the native-English speaking student population attending private American universities in non-Anglophone contexts is relatively small in many instances and almost non-existent in others. In these circumstances writing centers are critical inclusions within the range of student facilities offered by universities as they may offer virtually the only forum outside of the classroom where students can practice expressing themselves orally in the target language in the pursuit of gaining better marks on writing assignments, applying for a job, or simply refining conversation skills. Research carried out by Liebowitz and Goodman (1997), Gordon (2008) and Matsuda et al (2011) seems to confirm this.

One facet of accreditation is the necessity for institutions to provide student facilities outside of the classroom for academic improvement. Outside of a library, a student led study/reading group, or an unstructured, impromptu group of peers, there is virtually no other forum to receive input or advice of an academic nature. Brauer (2004) believes that this type of Anglophone university accommodation needs to be presented in such a way that students feel they are not being singled out as a result of academic weakness. In an effort to evaluate the effectiveness of writing centers in some quantifiable way, methods have evolved to measure

the perceived usefulness of a writing center through feedback questionnaires requested of students who use the facility.

Publications on writing center practice and theory most likely stem from a response to the increased accountability expected at tertiary institutions across the United States by recognition agencies such as, the Council for Higher Education Accreditation (CHEA) or the Department of Education (DOE) in the US, which evaluate institutions based on a clear set of criteria and grant, renew, or deny accreditation. Many universities stake their reputations on their accreditation status, which needs to be renewed periodically. Therefore standards must be maintained or improved through the ongoing upgrading of facilitating activities of both teaching and administrative staffs.

Due to the confusion that can occur when assessing the quality of a US degree and the existence of degree mills, US accrediting agencies should be obliged to amend their guidelines governing US institutions abroad to specifically provide professionally staffed writing centers at American accredited universities. As American accredited universities increasingly forge partnerships with universities globally, the pressure for US accreditors to evaluate foreign institutions will increase. Therefore methods and approaches to evaluate these will need to evolve to suit the changing landscape of higher education worldwide.

Conclusion

University writing support facilities are playing an increasingly important role at universities and proving to be a necessary facility that could be a requisite inclusion in the accreditation process as a measurable tool for improving institutional effectiveness, especially for those institutions operating outside of an English language context. Students attending English-medium universities in non-Anglophone contexts can benefit from having access to such a facility.

An accreditation system exclusively for writing center programs, as separate from accreditation held by the institution which houses the library, has become somewhat noteworthy recently, lies outside of the parameters of this work but deserves additional research. This is further indication of both the importance and the proliferation of centers across the US and, more recently, in Anglophone countries. Due to this expansion on the concept of institutional accreditation, attention is now placed on those English-medium, US associated and accredited, tertiary institutions operating overseas in non-English contexts. Institutions in these environments are as much in need of professionally staffed writing centers as their American counterparts if not more due to the multilingual composition of the student population (*See figure 1*).

MSCHE is the authority most commonly associated with the accreditation of overseas American universities. In order for an institution to receive and maintain accreditation according to the policy guidelines established by the MSCHE, it must “demonstrate a quantifiable commitment to focusing continually on...continuous improvement beyond minimal compliance...to establish a culture and processes that not only ensure their quality but also support continuous improvement” (*Becoming Accredited*). Establishing professionally staffed writing centers at accredited US associate institutions in non-English contexts would be one way to fulfill a requirement in order to retain or renew accreditation status.

(5098)

References

Bardo, J.W. (2009) The impact of the changing climate for accreditation on the individual college or university: five trends and their implications. *New Directions for Higher Education*, no145, spring 2009, Wiley Periodicals.

Brauer, G., (2004) The role of writing in higher education abroad. *ESL writers: a guide for writing center tutors*. eds. Shanti Bruce and Ben Rafoth. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann. 134-135.

Bruce, S. & Rafoth, B. eds. (2004) *ESL writers: a guide for writing center tutors*. Portsmouth, NH: Boynton/Cook Heinemann.

Cooke, R. & Bledsoe, C. (2008) Writing centers and libraries: one-stop shopping for better term papers. *The reference librarian*. Vol. 49(2) (no.102), Haworth Press.
<<http://www.haworthpress.com>>

Council for Higher Education Accreditation [CHEA]. April (2005) Degree mills: an old problem and a new threat Accessed: 31. Jan. 2011.

Eaton, J.S., (2009) Accreditation in the United States. *New Directions for Higher Education*, no 145, Spring 2009, Wiley Periodicals.

Elmborg, J.K. and Hook, S., eds. (2005) *Centers for learning: writing centers and libraries in collaboration*. Chicago, IL: Association of College Research Libraries.

Heyneman, S.P. (1997) International Education: More but Different, Quality of International Education Information. Accessed: June 2011

<<http://education.stateuniversity.com/pages/2120/International-Education.html>>

Kelderman, E. (2009) New rules drafted for college accreditation. *Chronicle of Higher Education*. May 2009, Vol. 55 Issue 38, pp.1-7.

Leibowitz, B. and Goodman, K. (1997) The role of a writing centre in increasing access to academic discourse in a multilingual university. *Teaching in Higher Education*, Routledge, Mar. 1997, Vol. 2 Issue 1, pp.5-15.

Matsuda, P.K., Cox, M., Jordan, J., Ortmeier-Hooper, C. eds. (2010) *Second-language writing in the composition classroom: a critical sourcebook*, Boston: Bedford/St. Martins, p. 2.

McGuire, P.A. (2009) "Accreditation's Benefits for Individuals and Institutions". *New Directions for Higher Education*, no. 145, Spring 2009, Wiley Periodicals.

Middle States Commission on Higher Education, (2009) *Becoming accredited: handbook for applicants and candidates for accreditation*. March 1, 2009.

Perley, J.E. and Tanguay, D.M., (2008) Institutional accreditation. *Academe*, Mar/Apr 2008, Vol. 94 Issue 2, pp.89-91. 3rd March, 2011.

Procopio, C.H., (2010) Differing administrator, faculty, and staff perceptions of organizational culture as related to external accreditation. *Academic Leadership*, Spring Issue, [e-journal] 8 (2), [Accessed 10th March 2011].

Ryan, L. and Zimmerelli, L. eds., (2002) *The Bedford guide for writing tutors*. Boston: Bedford/St. Martin's.

Troneckova, V., vtroneckova@unyp.cz, (2011) MSMT, etc...: Stats template. [email] Message to S. Aljoe (saljoe@unyp.cz). Sent Monday 12, Sep. 2011, 13:09.

Volkwein, J.F., (2009) "The Assessment Context: Accreditation, Accountability, and Performance". *New Directions for Institutional Research*, (1), pp. 3-12. DOI 10.1002/ir.327 [Accessed 3 March 2011].

Waller, S.C., (2002) "A Brief History of University Writing Centers: Variety and Diversity", (n.d.).

Appendix 5:

Sample initial survey questions for instructors and students

For Instructors:

1. Do you give your students essay-type assignments to complete? Select one answer.
2. If you answered yes, please go to question number 3, if you answered, no, please provide a brief reason here.
3. How did you learn about the University Writing Center?
4. Have you advised or encouraged any of your students to visit the Writing Lab? Select one answer.
5. For which department (s) do you teach? Select all that apply. 6. Are you bilingual/multilingual?
- 6.a. If yes, what is your first language? 6.b. What are the other languages?
7. In your opinion, is the Writing Lab a useful facility for students? Select one
8. Do you think visiting the Writing Lab at least once should be a requirement for all new students?
9. Any additional comments you can provide below will be greatly appreciated:

For Students:

1. How did you learn about the University Writing Center?
2. Have you visited the University Writing Center before? Circle one.
3. How many years have you been enrolled at UNYP?
4. What is your major?
5. Are you bilingual/multilingual?
6. If yes, what is your first language? Other language (s)?
7. In your opinion, is the Writing Lab a useful facility for students?
8. Do you think visiting the Writing Lab at least once should be a requirement for all new students?
9. Any additional comments you can provide below will be greatly appreciated:

Appendix 6:

Toward an Alternative to the Traditional Writing Centre Model in Non-Anglophone Contexts: A Small-scale Study in Prague, Czech Republic - Shaana Aljoe MA, TEFL University of New York in Prague (USA/CZ) and Bolton University

Profile

Shaana Aljoe currently teaches English Composition to first-year international students at the University of New York in Prague, Czech Republic which is a private, fully-accredited, English-medium University. She founded the University's first Writing Lab and is also the English Language Programs Director. Her research interests focus on the provision of writing assistance for L2 students in non-Anglophone contexts. Having established student writing assistance at one university using the American format of provision, she now advocates for alternative forums of writing support in a European context.

Abstract

Is the most efficient form of university writing support for international students a conventional writing centre where only one-to-one tutoring is provided? In a European context, given that writing support is still a relatively new concept, the answer to this question appears to be no. Although many English-medium universities that currently exist in non-Anglophone contexts provide traditional one-to-one tutoring, mirroring a format that originates in the United States, it has become clear through one small-scale study in Czech Republic that both European students and those from other nations prefer to be tutored on a one-to-many basis. This is an account of how that preference was detected by offering students a choice between conventional and not-so-conventional forums of assistance. I propose that in a European context, the American format of one-to-one tutoring might be dispensed with in favour of a more inclusive forum of assistance described as 'one-to-many' and labelled English Composition Tutoring Classes at the institution where the discovery was made. The distinction between these classes and seminars is made in an effort avoid confusion. I conclude by suggesting that writing centre directors and tutors might rethink their traditionally formatted facilities in order to better serve the students attending their English-medium universities, especially those located in non-Anglophone contexts.

Key words: University writing labs/centres, writing tutor, EAP, NNES, Composition studies

Introduction

The most common form of tertiary level writing support model for multilingual students is currently a writing centre where *mainly* one-to-one consultations with a tutor exist. The concept and practice of one-to-one consultations is a familiar one but its efficacy is worthy of consideration. Higher education researchers working with multilingual students question the efficacy of this writing support service model outside of an Anglo-American context (Leibowitz and Goodman 1997). The most common type of tertiary level writing support is a writing centre; a stand-alone entity, separate from other traditional departments where students can, on a voluntary basis, expect a one-to-one conference on aspects of academic writing with an English for Academic Purposes (EAP) trained tutor.

However, academic writing and writing support are still relatively new concepts for European students studying in the English language at English-medium institutions. It is argued here that an additional, permanently scheduled, 'one-to-many', classroom held writing support setting can further support the traditional 'one-to-one' writing support model. Moreover, if only one form of support can be provided, in a European context, the one-to-many classroom format of tutoring should be chosen *instead of* the traditional one-to-one model first developed in the United States.

The significance of writing support in non-Anglophone contexts

At universities, courses are traditionally administered over a period of approximately 12 weeks through a number of regularly scheduled classes that comprise one semester. Two semesters make up the conventional academic year starting in the autumn and continuing through until the spring. Many universities also provide similarly scheduled seminars in addition to classes for more advanced and/or detailed small group discussions. What distinguishes seminars from a one-to-many tutoring model is that in seminars students are tutored as one cohesive group, whereas one-to-many tutoring provides a classroom space for individuals and small groups of students to practice various aspects of writing with an EAP tutor who floats between individuals and small groups providing guidance as needed or requested.

Writing support programs, often referred to as writing labs or centres, exist at accredited institutions operating in Anglophone contexts and increasingly at those located in non-Anglophone contexts. The existence and progress of the European Association of Writing Centres, *The Writing Lab Newsletter*, and *The Writing Center Journal* are evidence of this. Writing tutors face unique challenges in our attempts to instruct international English composition students. Working at English-medium, Anglo-American, higher education institutions which are located outside of contexts where English is not the commonly spoken language inside and outside the classroom, writing support tutors have a responsibility to share their experiences in order to progress toward a global framework for writing support, and more importantly, its assessment.

Research pertaining to writing support in the form of writing centres or labs in an American or Anglophone context is rich (Clark & Healey 1996; Shakespeare 1985; Donnelly & Garrison 2003; Thompson 2006; Moberg 2010; Ryan & Zimmerelli 2006; Lerner 2003), however research into writing centres outside of this context is comparatively less. Today, in an Anglo-American context, the provision of a writing centre at many universities is commonplace. Locating a college campus without a physical or electronically accessible writing centre or tutorial service is challenging. The growing number of writing support initiatives at this level of academia underscores the importance of written English in academic contexts. This paper presents a solution to a problem encountered by an English-medium university writing centre located in a non-English geographical context. The increasing proliferation of accredited, international, English-medium, institutions suggests the need for further research into the models of the writing support that they offer.

Many of the writing support tutor training guides available focus on a readership that is U.S. based. The guides are written for tutors of English as Second Language (ESL) writers (Bruce and Rafoth 2004; Elmborg & Hook 2005; Ryan & Zimmerelli 2006). Although practitioners in Europe can learn much from these manuals, tutors located outside the U.S. have additional considerations in that they teach at English-medium tertiary institutions that are located in non-Anglophone locations. This means that the level of exposure to the target language –English– is much reduced. Therefore, for the purposes of this

paper second language (L2) students are better described as English for Academic Purposes (EAP) learners than ESL learners.

The development of one university writing centre in Prague.

In the autumn of 2009, an EAP trained composition instructor established a traditional writing lab at a private, English-medium, American accredited university in Prague, Czech Republic. The lab was an ad hoc solution to the vexing problem of high failure rates in first year English Composition courses. Management reported that the effect of failure rates in one course was increasing student attrition rates of the University generally. In this University's particular instance and at this stage of its inception, it was premature to consider the ethical issues such as text ownership that so many researchers call attention to today (Clark and Healy 1996; Pemberton 1995; Barnett 1997). Although ethical considerations affect writing centre policy from the beginning, more important at the time was making a centre available to students at the earliest date possible, preferably in time for the start of the semester. A sense of urgency developed after management recognized that establishing such a facility was an important factor that separated the University from others located in native English contexts.

Figure 1 provides a national profile of registered first-semester students in autumn 2009. From this group a small number of survey respondents, enrolled in the first-semester English Composition course, volunteered to complete the writing centre consultation form after visiting the centre for assistance with an assignment. At this university degree-seeking students are required to successfully complete two semesters of English Composition in order to fulfil prerequisites for more advanced courses where a higher level of language skill is required. Exemption is possible for one or both semesters through transferred credit systems or internationally recognized Advanced Placement tests. Considering that most of the students entering the institution are non-native English speakers (NNES) they will most likely be required to take both semesters of English Composition. The figure (1) below illustrates the highly diverse nature of a first-year cohort.

Figure 1: National profile of registered first-semester students for autumn 2009

UG Intake Nationalities breakdown	Fall 09
Czech	35
Slovak	13
Russian	27
Ukraine	3
Kazakhstan	18
Azerbaijan	4
France	24
US	6

Cyprus	2
Other*	25
Total	157

(Troneckova, 2011)

*Other nationalities can include: Albania, Bosnia Herzegovina, Germany, Macedonia, Georgia, Greece, Iraq, Pakistan, Italy, Spain, Norway, Sweden, Holland, Portugal, Armenia, Bulgaria, Belarus, Croatia, Estonia, Finland, Kosovo, Moldova, Serbia, Slovenia, Turkey, Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan, Mongolia, China, Korea, Vietnam, Japan, Nigeria, South Africa, Israel, Mexico, Brazil, Columbia, Canada, U.K., and New Zealand.

Due to the pilot scheme nature of that first writing centre in 2009, no budget or funding was allocated for its establishment and maintenance. In spite of this, a rudimentary writing laboratory was established consisting of furniture commandeered from existing library stock; a large, stand-alone desk in one of the four rooms comprising the school library with two chairs, one of which is occupied by an experienced EAP trained composition instructor (the tutor). Initially, the writing lab was open for a few hours once a week and, after moving to a private office to better accommodate one-to-one sessions, increased operation to three hours a day, four days a week, and consultations would last from 10 to 30 minutes where students were seen on a first-come, first-served basis.

This initial writing lab represented a welcome addition to the University and was a proud achievement. Adding value to my institution was heartening, and the feedback from the students who came for a consultation was also encouraging. Satisfaction surveys were mailed to students and more than half believed the addition of a writing lab for students was indeed beneficial. However, it became apparent that the lab – and its one tutor – were not enough to satisfy the demands of a student population that is 95% NNES. EAP learners deal with issues that are shaped by their perceptions and location. Researchers are becoming increasingly aware of the distinctions between writing centres within and outside of Anglophonic contexts. Writing centre professional, Muriel Harris (1986) observed that multilingual students have ‘habits, behaviour patterns, perspectives, ways of delivering information, and other cultural filters that affect writing in ways we often do not sufficiently attend to and indeed are in danger of ignoring’ (87).

Further, Gerd Brauer (2006) identified the problems that many university tutors outside of the Anglo-American experience encounter. Many students in this context misunderstand the role of the writing lab tutor, do not view writing as a process, or do not feel the need to attend at all for one reason or another (134). His experience at the University of Education in Freiberg, Germany, directly reflects the challenges that many writing tutors encounter in non-Anglophonic contexts.

The catalyst to move beyond conventional one-to-one tutoring

After the writing lab had been in operation for one year, it became clear that another form of support was necessary to address management’s concern that the writing lab, as pleasant as it was to have one, could not provide enough support to curb failure rates, therefore another writing support solution had to be found. Although the writing lab was a welcome addition to the facilities offered by the university, it did

not seem to have a significant effect in terms of reducing failure rates in English Composition. In brief, a way had to be found for writing support to accommodate a greater number of students.

The Introduction of an English Composition Tutoring Class: 'one-to-many' tutoring

The solution came in the offer of a non-credit English *Composition Tutoring Class* (CTC) for students to attend on a voluntary basis. The CTC operated in virtually the same manner as a traditional one-to-one tutoring session in the writing lab, but allowed many students to obtain writing support with a tutor in a classroom environment. The CTC was given a permanent time slot in the daily schedule of university courses, and students could attend individually, in pairs, or in small groups. Again, the CTC was the responsibility of one professionally trained tutor, but students did not work together in one cohesive group as would happen in a traditional classroom or seminar.

A comparison of the established writing lab with the CTC after its first year of operation is shared here which serves to inform developers of future writing support initiatives at other non-Anglophone based, English-medium tertiary institutions. Both the writing lab and the CTC were ad hoc creations from the beginning; the CTC was a natural outgrowth from the writing lab given the diversity of the student population. The most significant differences between the two forms of writing support after only one year of operation were compelling.

It became immediately apparent that students who had never visited the lab readily visited the CTC. Reasons for this lie partly in cultural differences; two or three students sometimes visit the writing lab together where one of them would request help on an assignment. Furthermore, some students felt uncomfortable with the one-to-one consultation of the lab and felt more at ease working on their writing in a larger classroom setting. Both the writing lab tutor and the CTC tutor are composition instructors and students reported feeling uneasy approaching their respective composition instructors for additional help. A greater number of students visited the CTC than the writing lab. This was probably more a matter of physical space, but attendance records reveal that far more students could be accommodated in one week at the CTC than in the lab.

Another observation made after the first year of offering the CTC was that students attended the CTC regularly. One reason for regular attendance is the inclusion of CTC in the regular schedule of classes. Students knew that help was available whenever they browse a full course timetable. The writing lab also appears on the schedule of classes, but the opening hours are limited which may not be convenient or even alienate some students. Furthermore, students visited both the lab and CTC. Although the incidence of confusion or alienation is rare, it is worth highlighting to show that given the geographical context, students must use their own initiative to gain as much L2 language exposure as possible. Far from being language zealots, these students realize that exposure and practice are critical to success in this context. And lastly, composition failure rates were reduced to the satisfaction of management. It is possible that students' awareness of the high composition failure rates may have also contributed to this result. The appearance of the tutoring classes on the complete courses timetable may also have alerted students to the importance of accuracy in their writing.

Due to the disparity between what multilingual students think is appropriate and what is actually acceptable academic writing, some researchers have advocated *requiring* first-year English composition students to attend a writing support session (Leibowitz and Goodman 1997, 87). I argue that this mandate may prove unnecessary if international EAP students are offered a less conventional, customized forum of writing assistance.

It is worth noting here, that although many writing centres also provide electronic formats of writing support, Writing support specialist, Eric Moberg (2010) asserts that “the use of both on-line and brick and mortar service delivery models allow program and institutions to accentuate the advantages of each and accommodate for weaknesses” (2). This would mean that the introduction of the CTC counterbalances the weaknesses of the one-to-one consultations occurring in the writing lab and, it seems, vice versa. Many universities are connected digitally so students have access to online assistance. This kind of help is invaluable to students, but “the technology should be seen as a tool, not a magic wand,” (1). More research is needed to determine to what extent is electronic writing assistance valuable for students.

Conclusion

Support and interventions for multilingual students can take a variety of models, but the most common seems to be the North American style where a one-to-one conference is held between a tutor and a student. This report attempts to broaden the framework to accommodate student resistance to seeking help and increased student demand in an efficient manner. By experimenting with or redesigning the writing support forums offered, especially to international students in non-Anglophonic contexts, composition instructors will likely find that students respond more positively to being given a less conventional forum of assistance from which to seek help.

Although increased study has contributed much to the writing centre movement, researchers believe much more is needed that focuses on evaluating writing support at tertiary institutions in specific international contexts (Law & Murphy 1997; Donnelly & Garrison 2003; Lerner 2003; Thompson 2006). American accredited English-medium universities such as those that exist in non-English-speaking locations will likely benefit from redesigning, establishing, and maintaining *Composition Tutoring Classes* over traditional one-to-one tutoring conferences as a means of providing multilingual international university students the academic support needed to flourish in English-medium higher education.

References

- Barnett, R., W. (1997). “Redefining Our Existence: An Argument for Short- and Long-term Goals and Objectives” *The Writing Center Journal*, 17 (2), spring. Print.
- Brauer, G. (2006). “The Role of Writing in Higher Education Abroad” *ESL Writers: A Guide for Writing Center Tutors*. Eds. S. Bruce and B. Rafoth, Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann 134-135. Print.
- Centers for Learning: Writing Centers and Libraries in Collaboration*. (2005)Eds. J. K. Elmborg and S. Hook, Chicago, IL. American Library Association. Print.
- Clark, I. and D. Healy (1996). “Are Writing Centers Ethical?” *WPA Writing Program Administration*. 20 (1), fall/winter.
- Donnelly, E. and K. Garrison. (2003).“Tapping Multiple Voices in Writing Center Assessment. *Academic Exchange Quarterly* 7 (4).
- Harris, M. (1986) “*Teaching one-to-one*’. The Writing Center Conference. Urbana, Illinois: National Council of Teachers, 87.

- Law, J. and C. Murphy. (1997) "Formative Assessment and the Paradigms of Writing Center Practice." *The Clearing House*, 72(2),106-108.
- Leibowitz, B. and K. Goodman. (1997) "The Role of a Writing Centre in Increasing Access to Academic Discourse in a Multilingual University." *Teaching in Higher Education*, 2(1) 5-15.
- Lerner, N. (2003) "Writing Center Assessment: Searching for the 'Proof' of Our Effectiveness". *The Center Will Hold: Critical Perspectives on Writing Center Scholarship*. Eds. Michael A. Pemberton and Joyce Kinhead. Logan UT: Utah State University Press.
- Moberg, E. (2010) "The College Writing Center: Best Practices, Best Technologies." Pub. Mar. 7, 2010. Acc. July. 1-2. Web <www.eric.ed.gov/ERICWebPortal/recodDetail?accno=ED508644>.
- Pemberton, M. (1995) "Writing Center Ethics: Questioning Our Own Existence." *The Writing Center Newsletter* 19.5:8-9.
- The Bedford Guide for Writing Tutors*. (2006) Eds. Ryan, L. and L. Zimmerelli. Fifth edition, Boston, MA: Bedford/St. Martins.
- Troneckova, V. (2009) [Rector's Assistant] University of New York in Prague, enrollment record for incoming students, autumn. Email to author.
- Shakespeare, W.O. (1985) *Achieving the Ideal Writing Center by Establishing the Role of the Writing Center within the College or University*. The Annual Meeting of Southeastern Writing Center Association, Atlanta, GA, April 18-20.
- Thompson, I. (2006) "Writing Center Assessment" Why and a Little How". *The Writing Center Journal*, 26 (1), 33-61.

Appendix 7:

The Gamification of Writing Support in Non-Anglophone Contexts: A Practice Model Using the Characteristics of Video Game Design

Shaana A. Aljoe

University of New York in Prague (CZ) and Bolton University (UK)

Abstract

Writing support facilities are becoming commonplace at English-medium universities globally. However, writing support units located outside of English-speaking contexts are for the most part perceived by some international students as centres for English language remediation and exist to serve the needs of students who are academically challenged. It is therefore a writing support tutor's mission to encourage students to view writing support as support for *all* students, as would be the case in an English-speaking context where these facilities are considered an integral part of colleges and universities. This report encourages the use of video game design characteristics by writing support tutors to introduce students to the writing process and highlights issues that writing tutors in non-Anglophone contexts should be aware of when advertising the services of the writing support facility and in face-to-face discussions with individual students. The proposed practice model should be viable for use at similar institutions of higher education located within and outside of English-speaking contexts. [147]

Key words: English-medium higher education, writing support, EAP, ESL, gamification

Introduction

University writing support researchers have come to the realization that the one-size-fits-all approach to the provision of writing support facilities as developed in the United States does not apply to a majority international, non-native English speaking (NNES) student population (Brauer 2002; Cohen, Ferrell Justice and Dempsey 2014; Aljoe 2015). Especially in non-Anglophone European countries, students see requesting help from someone other than peers or instructors as a sign of weakness and do not readily seek assistance as many would in American or Anglophone contexts (Brauer 2004). Cultural mores are very much involved in asking for help. As early as 1975 this cultural difference was acknowledged by sociologists Donald Light, Jr. and Suzanne Keller (1985) who confirm, "Not all peoples have adopted the same basic values and norms as traditional Western societies" (p. 66). This is essentially what prevents students from making frequent and regular use of facilities like university writing support units.

Increasingly, it has become apparent that the popularity of video gaming, especially among young adults, is ever growing. Video games are designed by their creators to be addictive though not in a clinical sense, but game designers are always looking for ways to make their games more interesting in an effort to increase the amount of time people will spend playing them... [Game designers] want you – once you log in or pick up a controller- to never want to stop playing. Writing support practitioners have much to learn from video game designers in this respect. Researchers have shown that getting students to engage with writing support tutors or facilities takes much more effort in non-Anglophonic contexts with students who are not familiar with the concept of writing support (Brauer 2004; Cohen, Ferrell Justice and Dempsey 2014). Therefore, the question is whether the features of video game design can

be applied to writing support provision in order to encourage students to make effective use of a writing support unit such as a writing lab or centre.

One of the most important issues currently facing writing support tutors is the students' reluctance to use the support services in such a way as to reflect that writing is a process. However, the primary job of any writing instructor or tutor is to get students to view writing as a process. It is common practice for some university students (including non-native speakers) to postpone completing assignments until the very last minute before they are due or, worse still, simply not to complete them at all. This is where the characteristics of video game 'addiction' can be used by writing instructors and tutors to assist students with written assignments.

While it seems true that non-native speaking students can be coaxed into seeking writing help or even required to do so, additional tools may be employed to more adequately address the need for students to see writing as a process. This paper presents a general practice model that writing support practitioners may use with international students who attend English-medium universities in non-Anglophone contexts that can help students to feel more confident about requesting help with their writing across the curriculum. It also has real world applications that go beyond the purely academic experience.

The use of games in higher education

Naturally, in the 21st Century, research on gaming in higher education is commonly linked to video game simulation or other digital device (Randel et al. 1992; Garris, Ahlers and Driskell 2002; Mozellus 2014; X). Thomas and Austin (2005) have asserted that on writing courses in higher education, grammar can be supplemented using both non-electronic games and electronic activities. However, the research on purely non-electronic gaming in education generally seems plentiful and is commonly based on games developed before computers were invented. One example is a game called *20 Questions* which was invented in the United States in the 19th century and subsequently computerized into toy form by Robin Burgener in 1988 (20Q.net). In this game the teacher or a designated student writes down or thinks of a specific aspect of language learning such as vocabulary which fellow students must guess, through asking a series of 20 well-crafted questions.

Alejandro Bernardo (2010) who has worked extensively with college level research writing students has discovered that, especially for English as a Second Language (ESL) or English for Academic Purposes (EAP) students, at university level "many students feel inundated and beleaguered by the [writing] procedure, especially when they have to repeatedly revise their drafts" (p. 1). This is strong justification for adding a fun component to college level writing courses. Bernardo (2010) lists non-digital games such as 20Q, *Preciseword Puzzle*, *Solve that Gobbledygook!*, *Nosebleed* and others which he believes are effective for teaching aspects of language to university-level ESL students. He argues that by adding a game oriented component to lesson plans, writing instructors might possibly motivate more students to view academic writing positively.

International university student profile

At institutions of higher education in non-Anglophone locations where non-native English-speaking students form the majority student population, cultural factors can play a significant role in the success of a writing support unit. Sociologists confirm that cultural relativity is an important aspect for writing tutors to consider, especially when establishing writing support units outside of Anglophone or western contexts. Light Jr. and Keller (1985) remind us, “Behaviour that is deemed appropriate in one society may be deemed inappropriate and even immoral in another” (p. 66-67). Requesting help with academic assignments is not included in any list of cultural universals. By simply attending an English-medium institution of higher learning in a non-Anglophone context students are engaging in what sociologists refer to as diffusion. In other words, upon entry, students are not only learning content and language in their course work, they are also adjusting to a different ‘culture’ of learning.

The research on working with second-language (L2) student writers who, for the most part, seem reluctant to engage with writing support units in higher education for fear of being seen or treated as remedial or deficient in language ability is growing and reveals a significant trend (Brauer 2004; Hayward 2004; Cohen, Ferrell Justice and Dempsey 2014). Students who attend English-medium universities can be forgiven for believing that having passed the required international English language test in order to gain entry to English-medium higher education, there is no necessity for further English language development outside of the contents of courses. This means the traditional model of a writing support facility such as a one-to-one structured writing lab or writing centre unit has to be rethought and promoted differently in a non-Anglophone context.

Using video game design

Many of today’s students in higher education have varying degrees of familiarity with video games. Some are indeed addicted, others not so much. However, it is worth noting that according to a non-commercial gaming addiction information website, “video games are designed to be addictive. Not addictive in the clinical sense of the word, but game designers are always looking for ways to make their games more interesting and increase the amount of time people will spend playing them... once a person logs on or picks up the controller the designer never wants the player to stop playing” (What Makes... 2015).

The research being done on using video game design to teach educative content is wide-ranging. It has now become apparent that writing support facilities can make use of the design features of video games as one way to encourage EAP students at English-medium universities to seek help in a way that has two major benefits. The first benefit is that students will be encouraged to use the writing assistance facility on a more regular basis (not just the day before an assignment is due), whether it is a one-to-one writing lab session or a one-to-many workshop style forum. Secondly, students will have the additional benefit of gaining proficiency and mastering in English language usage, which will aid them in preparing for their future careers and enable them to function more effectively in any work environment where English language skills are requisite.

There are five characteristics of video game design which are present in the practice model presented here of which the high score is the first. The effort taken to attempt to beat the high score can keep players occupied for hours. Secondly, beating the game is when players feel motivated to move through the levels to accomplish the next task. Thirdly, role-playing lets players create characters in the game and go on adventures while playing. Fourthly, the pleasure of discovering how to do something and how

to do it well can be fascinating. And, lastly, video gaming allows players to build relationships with each other and keeps them interested in playing (What Makes... 2015).

The practice model

The practice model developed for use by writing support tutors for students attending English-medium universities in non-Anglophone locations includes 15 tasks which are listed on one side of an A4 sheet of paper. The model can be digitized and uploaded to a university server, making it more easily accessible for those who prefer that format. There are seven categories of language practice represented in chart form including: short essays, long essays, senior or final year project, professional career, speaking practice (specific), reading practice and another speaking practice (general). Students should complete at least 12 of the 15 tasks listed in one semester. If the writing support unit budget allows, small prizes or incentives may be given to students who complete the 12 challenges listed per term.

After each writing challenge there are five numbered circles, each representing a single visit to the writing support tutor. The tutor marks or signs a number for each student visit for the appropriate writing challenge. The student should attach hard copies of each draft to the sheet and number them for two important reasons. Firstly, to see the progress that they have made for each writing challenge, and, secondly, as evidence to support any prize giving or award activity at the end of the semester. (See Appendix)

The practice model integrates the characteristics of video game design that in order to complete the challenge and win any potential prize or award, students must evidence the completion of five visits to the writing support unit for at least 12 of the 15 writing challenges listed. As students work through the challenges, visiting the writing tutor with each draft, students will familiarize themselves with writing support, taking away the cultural misconception of an admission of weakness on the part of the student. Since some challenges refer to professional careers, students will be encouraged to think about their future aspirations and what happens after graduation. They can role-play professional interviews and give short presentations in the privacy of their writing support consultation with a tutor. Students are often encouraged by discovering how to do something well, and with the five visits required, students will be able to see their progression to mastery in varying degrees. Lastly, some students will likely 'play' the challenge in pairs or groups, adding an element of competition amongst each other to ratchet up the 'fun' aspect of the challenge. Progression can be posted online so that students can compare their progress with others.

Conclusion

Writing support facilities at English-medium universities in non-Anglophone settings have additional considerations to make when tutoring students. Implementing gamification in writing support programs

may attract students who would otherwise be reluctant to request writing assistance purely of their own volition. Researchers agree that courses in higher education institutions could benefit from incorporating a gaming aspect into class lectures (Garris, Ahlers and Driskell 2002; Thomas and Austin 2005; Bernardo 2010; Mozellus 2014). It should then follow that writing support units should also incorporate a gaming aspect into tutoring conferences so that students may become accustomed to western notions such as requesting assistance when needed. Also, adding a gaming component to higher education studies should attract more students to visit the writing support facility.

International students enrolled at English-medium universities in non-Anglophone contexts have unique cultural considerations when engaging with the academy. Although some may have a familiarity with western academic practices, such as regularly visiting a writing support unit, there are others who may not have had this experience and will find it completely alien to regularly request help with writing at this level of study. In order to solve the issue of students not making adequate use of any writing support program, writing tutors can introduce the practice model proposed here.

The model presented can be modified to suit the purposes and practices of writing support units at different institutions of higher learning, whether they are technical schools, colleges or universities. Admittedly, the practice model offered here will likely not appeal to some students, but it will encourage others as the practice gained here can only be of benefit for students by helping them to improve their English language skills. It helps to provide writing practice that goes beyond the classroom and extends into the professional world and beyond. The model presented here can be an entertaining way to attract more higher education students to gain competency in both written and oral English proficiency overall, and such writing activities will serve to encourage students to seek necessary help with writing generally.

[2,073]

References

- Aljoe, S. (2015) Reflections on the Establishment of English-medium University-level Writing Support in Central Europe. Multidisciplinary Academic Conference in Prague, Czech Republic, 20.2.2015, ISBN 978-80-905442-9-1
- Bernardo, A.S. (2010) Creative Ways of Teaching Research Paper Writing, *ELTWorldOnline.com*. Vol. 2. <<http://blog.nus.edu.sg/eltwo/2010/03/20/creative-ways-of-teaching-research-paper-writing/>>
- Brauer, G. (2002) Drawing Connections across Education: The Freiburg Writing Centre Model. *Language and Learning across the Disciplines* 5 (3): 61-67.
- Brauer, G. (2004) The Role of Writing in Higher Education Abroad. *ESL Writers: A Guide for Writing Centre Tutors*. Eds. Shanti Bruce and Ben Rafoth. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann. 134-135.
- Cohen, T., M Ferrell Justice and M.C. Dempsey (2014) Perceptions of Clinical Preparedness at a Large Urban US University: Is there a difference between US-born and Non-US born students? *Journal of International Students* 4 (3): 236-245.
- Garris, R., Ahlers, R., Driskell, J.E., (2002) Games, motivation and learning: A research and practice model. *Simulation & Gaming*, Vol 33. (4) 441-467.
- Hayward, N. (2004) "Insights into Cultural Divides" *ESL Writers: A Guide for Writing Centre Tutors*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann. 1-15.
- Light Jr., D. and S. Keller. (1985) *Sociology* 4th edition. New York: Alfred A Knopf , p.66-67, p.516.
- Mozelius, P. (2014) Game Based Learning – a way to Stimulate Intrinsic Motivation. International Conference on e-Learning: 272-278. Proquest. Published: June 2014/ accessed May 2015 <<http://search.proquest.com/pqcentral/>>
- Randel, J.M., B.A. Morris, C. Douglas Wetzel, and B.V. Whitehill. (1992) The Effectiveness of Games for Educational Purposes: A Review of Recent Research. *Simulation and Gaming*, Vol.23, No. 3. Pp.261-276.
- Thomas, K.M., and Austin, M.(2005) Fun with Fundamentals: Games and Electronic Activities to Reinforce Grammar in the College Writing Classroom. *Teaching English in the Two Year College*, 33 (1), 62-69. <<http://search.proquest.com/docview/220944572?accountid=17238>>
- What Makes a Video Game Addictive? (2015) Video Game Addiction.org, n.d. <<http://www.video-game-addiction.org/what-makes-games-addictive.html>>

Appendix

English Language Challenges for the Writing Lab and/or English Composition Tutoring

Directions: Complete five visits (points) for at least 12 of the 15 tasks.

Academic Career**Number of visits (points)****A. Short essay (s): 500-800 words**

Course: _____

① ② ③ ④ ⑤

Course: _____

① ② ③ ④ ⑤

Course: _____

① ② ③ ④ ⑤

B. Long essay (s): 800-2,000 words

Course: _____

① ② ③ ④ ⑤

Course: _____

① ② ③ ④ ⑤

Course: _____

① ② ③ ④ ⑤

C. Senior Project: 2,000 + words

Major: _____

Title: _____

① ② ③ ④ ⑤

D. Professional Career

Curriculum Vitae: _____

① ② ③ ④ ⑤

Resume: _____

① ② ③ ④ ⑤

Cover Letter: _____

① ② ③ ④ ⑤

E. Speaking Practice

Job Interview: _____

① ② ③ ④ ⑤

A speech: _____

① ② ③ ④ ⑤

A Presentation: _____

① ② ③ ④ ⑤

F. Reading Practice (5 – 10 minutes)

Choice of text: _____

① ② ③ ④ ⑤

G. Speaking practice (5 – 10 minutes)

Topic choice: _____

① ② ③ ④ ⑤